TOM O'KELLY

D.P. MORAN

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TOM O'KELLY

BY D. P. MORAN

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PREFACE.

Many of the readers of this immortal work may be shocked at the barbarous name—Ballytown. Yet the essence of highly respectable Anglo-Irish urban life might be expressed by that monstrous compound. Bally is a corruption of baile, which means a town, and the word town is altogether English. Ballytown, therefore, is a compound that fittingly stands for the entertaining mongrel society which is the subject of this book.

And where, pray, is Ballytown, the abnormally curious may ask? Dear madam, or sir, there is at least one Ballytown in nearly every county in Ireland, and in most counties there are several of them.

Obviously we look at Ballytown from a particular point of view. The number of pictures of Ballytown society that could be drawn is infinite, but every writer must choose his own foreground, and the rest tapers away in due perspective. It will occur to our readers that there are many pleasant and kindly aspects of Ballytown life that have not been dealt with. We have simply sketched a few leading features as seen from a particular point of view; but these features are not the less, but rather the more, important, because so many writers have either ignored them, or flattered them, in the drawing, out of all recognition.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER IS BRIEFLY INTRODUCED TO THE O'KELLY FAMILY.

When Tom O'Kelly came into the world his family had grown respectable. There were two horses in the stables, and a dog-cart and a wagonette in the coach-house; and the house he resided in was the envy of many of the boys with whom he span tops and played ball at school. Tom was a shy boy, who put his finger in his mouth when addressed by an elder person. Some old women thought he was proud because he didn't look pleased when they kissed him, and because they had noticed that he took the first opportunity to wipe the part kissed with the sleeve of his coat. Other old women said that he was a deep boy, who noticed everything and said nothing, whilst with some it was always: "Where's your tongue"? or, more sympathetically, "Wisha, the poor slob, lave him alone." It must not, however, be thought that Tom was an object of any considerable importance to young or old. He was only a moody little atom of budding Irish life, one amongst tens of thousands, and we introduce him first to the reader because he is the youngest of

the family; and the reader is warned thus early not too rashly to conclude that Tom is, was, or is ever likely to be, a hero. Though a silent boy, he often spoke volubly about his elders behind their backs, a practice in which several responsible members of his and other families encouraged him. This may seem an odd trait in Tom's character, but is there any reason why, if a person think anything, and is too shy to say it in the open, he should not unburden himself in the shade?

The O'Kellys were a rich family—that is, rich as families go in a struggling Irish town. They were not always so. The eldest son, Andrew, now a fashionable doctor, remembered the time when it was part of his daily duty to draw water from the street pump, when his father and mother lived in a little house in a back street of Ballytown; and often when Tom, dressed in a navy blue suit and buckled shoes, was taken for a walk with two of his sisters, Alice and Kitty—one of whom already spoke with quite an English accent—a couple of boys at a corner, or an old woman with a pail of water on her head passing by the way, would say something which would cause Alice to colour up and walk quicker, and Kitty to turn round with a look of defiance in her eyes. Miss Alice may walk as quickly as she likes, trot, gallop for the matter of that, but there are her poor relations on

every side of her, and if she will give herself airs on her native heath the penalty will be exacted from her to the full.

The O'Kellys consisted of ten—four boys and four girls—and the father and mother. There was also Hannah, the elderly maid-servant, and Patsy, the coachman, who also cleaned the knives. It was Miss Mary, the eldest girl, having seen most of the poverty, and so now the keenest on respectability, who was responsible for the extra duty allotted to Patsy. Patrick O'Kelly, the head of the house, came of a peasant stock. He had no education to speak of, except what he got from a daily perusal of the "Freeman's Journal"; but neither had he any humbug; and native ability and energy soon sent him to the top ranks amongst the business-men of Ballytown, where he now carried on the trade of corn merchant and had a mill of his own. He had vanities, as all Irishmen have, and in later years, when his eldest daughter had her own horse and trap, and insisted on Patsy, the stable-boy, being put into chocolate-coloured livery and folding his arms crosswise just as the Hon. Tony Trench's man did, one side of Patrick's head was struck with the nonsense of it all, but the other was tickled by the victory over the neighbours which it signified. Nonsense is nonsense; but all the same, neighbours must be shown their place; so the chocolate uniform and

the crossed arms and other vanities were tolerated. But if the head of the house allowed the rising generation to flap its wings in this manner, he was not going to make any attempt to emulate it. We will see him yet carried away headlong by vanities of his own, but he will remain plain Patrick O'Kelly through it all. He always said "marvel" for marble, and when the eldest daughter—whose education had been neglected for want of means in the early days, but who was now taking private lessons in French from Mrs. Tierney—feeling acutely the degradation which such mispronunciation brought upon the family, told him that the word was pronounced m-a-r, mar, b-e-l, bel, marble; he took her literally, and ever afterwards spoke of "mar-bell," with the accent decidedly on the last syllable. The last stage was worse than the first in the ears of Miss Mary, but she could not summon up courage to correct him a second time—from which fact the intelligent reader will see that Patrick was only docile within limits.

Miss Alice was the beauty of the family. She was a precocious girl, naturally affected, and living ever in a sentimental haze. She took scores of prizes at the convent school, and easily came first in English literature. However, we cannot conscientiously say that she had any ideas of her own, a fact which perhaps was largely responsible for

her distinctions in examinations. It was she who dressed Tom up in all manner of outlandish costumes and buckled shoes, and, though Tom was not bold enough to protest, he always felt—for since his earliest years he had an eye for the comic—that he looked ridiculous, particularly to his poor relations. Alice used also take him out of nights to the remote end of the garden, with a hand-book, a telescope and a bit of a wax candle in a bowl, to study astronomy. And when Tom learned to locate the Plough, and the North Star, he felt very proud, and conceived a great pity for the bold boys who played in the street, and who knew nothing of astronomy.

Miss Kitty was a "tom-boy" and could spin a top, jump a wall, or use her fists as well as any boy. She often used her fists on Tom, and when that much-abused boy clenched his teeth and looked dangerous, Miss Kitty would turn on him and say—"Oh, yes; you're a nice boy—hit a girl—would you?" Tom kept inviolate the laws of chivalry, though it early dawned upon his young mind that, if an unwritten law forbade a boy to hit a girl, there ought to be some spirit on the other side to protect the hapless juvenile male from undue abuse.

But that way of looking at it never struck Miss Kitty. However, she was a vigorous, bouncing leader of girls, and was in the main very kind to

Tom, and previous to his being brought out for a walk she would considerately wipe his face with a wet towel without soap—for soap always got into Tom's eye.

Peter, Tom's senior by a few years, looked down upon the latter as a negligible quantity, and modest Tom acquiesced in the arrangement. Peter, who was fourteen years of age at this time, regarded himself as a genius, and Tom, who had vague doubts about very many things, even at this early age, was inclined in the main to take everyone at his own price. One night Peter looked very profound as he and Tom were about to go to bed—they slept in the one room—and at last he told Tom that he had been for some time past thinking deeply on a matter which, however, Tom could not understand by any chance. After much appealing on the part of Tom, Peter consented to unburden his mind of this great idea. Thereupon Peter unfolded a scheme for a complete and satisfactory settlement of the Land Question. Tom, who often heard the newspaper read, recollected hearing something in a reported speech very like what Peter had said, but he didn't care to say so to Peter. He merely opened his eyes wide and said "Oh-h!" and added that it was wonderful of Peter to think of it and that he nearly—not quite—but nearly could understand it.

The second eldest daughter, Josephine, was now

a nun in a South American convent, and the second eldest son, who was mixed up in the Fenian movement of 1865-7, fled the country when a warrant was issued for his arrest, and he was now pursuing his fortune in the United States. Of those at home Mrs. O'Kelly was the only one that circumstances appeared to make no perceptible change in, except in so much as the more her worldly interests thrived, the larger grew the ragged company of beggars who waited at her door, and never waited in vain. She never turned her back on her poor relations; and even envy itself could not summon the heart to hurl a shaft at her. Often when Tom would be all alone on a May evening, thinking and day-dreaming, his mother would steal up to him and put her arms round him. Little Tom would feel a lump in his throat, and wish that some English soldier would draw his bayonet before them that he might defend her, and smite him to the ground or die. Tom and Peter hated everything that they thought was English; and at ten years of age Tom looked forward with pride to the gallows as his doom.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE FAMILY DINE AND A STRANGER KNOCKS AT THE DOOR.

THE O'Kelly family were sitting down to dinner one day at two o'clock.

"Where in the world is Tom?" asked Mrs. O'Kelly.

"He was down in the coach-house a quarter of an hour ago, helping Patsy to clean the harness," said Kitty.

Peter, who was dispatched down to the coach-house—and who, as a matter of fact, went no further than outside the door, where he remained for three minutes by the hall clock—came back with the information that he didn't see him anywhere.

"Run out like a good girl an' call Hannah," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"Oh, bother," growled Kitty, "what a fuss we make about Tom."

Then opening the door with much noise she shouted "Hannah" twice at the top of her voice, and was about to repeat the performance when she was interrupted by her mother.

"There now, that'll do, I can't hear my ears with your shouting."

A lumbering sort of noise and much nasal snuffling heralded Hannah's approach to the door.

"Yes'm."

"Yes what?" asked Mrs. O'Kelly.

"Yes 'am."

Miss Mary at this juncture fixed Hannah with her eye, whereupon the latter articulated: —

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you know where Master Tom is?"

"Wisha, indeed faith I don't, 'm."

"Oh, let us have our dinner, for God's sake, and don't be bothering about the boy," said Patrick O'Kelly, who had been humming a tune and beating time with the palm of his hand on his knee. "There's more damn row made in this house about nothing than in any house in Ireland. When the boy is hungry he'll come quick enough."

A silence fell upon the family after the delivery of this speech, and Hannah's squat form gradually drifted out of sight. The eating of the dinner then proceeded in silence. The head of the house, one of whose maxims was "quick at eating, quick at everything," appeared to be working against time. The meal consisted of pig's head and cabbage, and potatoes. Miss Alice looked upon pig's head and cabbage as low and vulgar, for there was no mention of the dish in poems or literature, and she frequently, in public, pitied the poor people who had to eat such dishes.

Notwithstanding a general impression to the contrary, there are many Irish people to whom nature has denied the gift of humour, and Alice never suspected that she presented a ridiculous picture to little Tom, who often contrasted her sentiments for pig's head and cabbage with her appetite for them. As for Kitty, she was honest enough to admit that quantity rather than quality was what she considered, and Andrew, who played the part of fashionable doctor very stylishly out of doors, confessed his partiality for pig's head and cabbage above any other dish in the world, and frequently, when he dined with the family, he—a fashionable doctor out of doors—would make his way into the kitchen, and, lifting the lid off the pot, feed his eyes and nose on what his palate longed for. Miss Mary, the eldest girl, had no particular views on these matters, her notions hovering round the auxiliaries rather than the principal elements of the meal. It was she who, a few months ago, introduced finger glasses into the dining economy. They came into the O'Kelly world doomed to die, for any one of several reasons. They were a perpetual source of badly smothered laughter to Mrs. O'Kelly, and nothing in Ireland, not even though it is as hard as crockery ware, can survive a perpetual fire of laughter. On the first occasion on which they were placed upon the table the head of the house

asked, with a sarcastic chuckle: "Who was mad enough to buy tumblers like them?" and before explanations as to their real use and nature could be offered, Patrick O'Kelly attempted to drink water out of one of them. When he spilt the water all over himself Tom and Peter commenced to laugh, and Mrs. O'Kelly animadverted on the clumsiness of her husband. Patrick, who in many ways had keen sensibilities, feeling that he occupied a ridiculous position grew very savage, asked what the devil they were laughing at, and, rising from his chair, left the dinner and house behind him.

Anglo-Irish urban society consists, for the most part, of little shoneens and big shoneens, and Andrew, who in his professional capacity got peeps into the household working of establishments belonging to shoneens of a higher grade than that to which his own belonged, suggested one day to Miss Mary that she did not properly know how to work the finger glasses. This suggestion came as a terrible blow to Miss Mary, and it is certain that her latest incursion into the unknown paths of gentility would have been abandoned, even if Peter and Tom had not settled the question by making cockshots of three of them.

We now return to the family at dinner. Patrick O'Kelly went on eating in silence.

"Well, thank God for that," said he, and,

with a self-satisfied sigh, he pushed his plate from him and left the room unceremoniously. That was Patrick's usual way. The family also heaved a sigh of relief when he had gone, and Mrs. O'Kelly took hold of a corner of the table-cloth and began to rub it softly, preparatory to starting a conversation. The fact was, conversation between the family was rather hampered when the head of the house was present. Marriage, or giving in marriage, or any gossip relating even remotely thereto, dare not be mentioned whilst Patrick was present, for Patrick would instantly put the closure upon anything of the sort.

"That'll do now; it's no subject to be spakin' about before young people, not to talk o' childre; so dhrop it now."

There were certain things to which Patrick, like every other person, shut his mind. If anyone, by way of arguing him down, asked if he didn't go "coortin'" himself at one time he would fly into a rage almost equal to that of young Jamesy Connors over the way, when he was told that his father once wore petticoats. Jamesy could never open his mind to contemplate that fact. So the family always talked more freely when Patrick was away.

Their talk on this occasion was suddenly interrupted by the advent of little Tom, who opened the door just wide enough to put his head in.

"That English chap is comin' up the sthreet. Whisht, there he's passin' the window."

Miss Alice was all blushes at once and rushed quickly upstairs to her room. A loud knock at the door coincided with a hasty re-arrangement of the dining-table, and the pig's head was laid on the side-board with a Japanese tray placed in front to hide it from view should the stranger by any chance get a look into the room. The family was well practised at making hasty re-arrangements of the dining-table, for highly-respectable Anglo-Irish urban families frequently dine on many things, such as "crubeens," the very existence of which—in public—they are ignorant of. It was not, however, until a second knock, more imperious than the first, was played upon the door that Hannah was moved to a sense of her duty.

"Botheration on them for knocks, a person can't ate their dinner in peace, like a christian, wud them," said she to herself as she drew her sleeve across her mouth and waddled from the kitchen. Hannah never opened the door at first further than was necessary to scan the person outside with one eye.

Mr. Herbert Sharp—"that English chap," as Tom contemptuously styled him—was on a visit to Mr. Wilkins-Jones, the grocer, whose wife was English. He had met Miss Alice at the hunt—for she and Miss Mary frequently went to the meets in their

dog-cart, with Patsy behind. It was evidently a case of love at first sight.

Now the Wilkins-Joneses were very much higher shoneens than the plain Patrick O'Kellys, and it gave as much pleasure to the latter as it did pain to the former when it so happened that Mr. Herbert Sharp fell a victim to the personal charms of Miss Alice. Mrs. O'Kelly, it is true, did not like the business from the first, and she said so; but Miss Mary, whose desire to score off the Wilkins-Joneses, outweighed her feeling of personal jealousy against her younger sister, and Dr. Andrew also, over-ruled her, so she agreed to allow Miss Alice to meet Mr. Sharp. But if they were to meet and go walking together, it was strictly to be understood that marriage was not to be thought of unless Mr. Sharp was willing to change his religion. The great danger of the arrangement was that Patrick O'Kelly might hear anything about it until everything was settled —even then a scene and much forcible language was to be expected. Tom fell black out with Miss Alice since, as he put it, "she went afther an English chap," and he used to whistle "God Save Ireland" in her presence by way of reminding her of her treachery.

The reader must remember that Hannah is all this time waddling on her way to the hall-door, and before she gets there a little scene will have been

enacted outside, a picture of which we will now attempt to draw.

Just as Mr. Herbert Sharp, who was dressed in a frock coat and a silk hat, finished his first knock at the door, Biddy, one of the most undeserving beggar-women of Ballytown, was passing on her rounds.

"Wisha, now, I wonder who's that poor "angi-shore" dhressed up like a wax figure," she muttered to herself, and then—for, though commiseration for those better placed than oneself is a luxury, a few tangible advantages are not unwelcome either—she turned round and made a low courtesy to the pale-faced, lack-lustre-eyed young gentleman.

"Sure 'tis you're the fine man entirely, yer honour," said she. "It's aisy known 'tis to the quality you belong and not to the Irish. Sure they haven't the manners nor the style at all, at all."

Biddy paused for a moment to admire the proportions of Mr. Sharp, and then proceeded:—

"I wonder now would you have a little sixpence for a poor old woman. But what am I sayin'—I suppose it's not knowin' what to do wud yer money ye are, yer honour."

Mr. Sharp was 28 years of age and an insurance clerk. Nature had put but few generous passions into him, and to anyone who, according to the current conventions of the day, was "above him," to him would he be most sleek and obsequious. His

mind was of such dimensions that the contemplation of his own accomplishments, virtues and superiority left no room in his head for any other considerations. The difference between a conceited prig and a generous man is that the former is always dwelling on his own attainments and looks at himself against backgrounds that tend to show him to advantage, whilst the latter has a wider range, follows the unattainable, measures himself against ideals, soon learns what a drop in the ocean of life he is at best, and finds out, good-humouredly, that all men, including himself, are more or less fools. Conceit comes from a poverty of mind and heart, and where that poverty is natural, you may laugh at the poor bounder; if it can be done without much trouble, make a flying kick at him; but don't waste your time in an attempt to teach him sense—what nature denies man cannot impart.

Mr. Herbert Sharp looked at Biddy, the undeserving beggarwoman. She had a twinkle in her eye, and his was lack-lustre; but what he was contemplating was her rags and miserable outward appearance. This made him feel superior, and his little chest dilated as he dwelt upon the fact that his manner and style had so deeply impressed her. Mr. Herbert Sharp thought of a shilling—in the first flush of self-satisfaction half-a-crown flitted for a moment across his mind—then he meditated upon

sixpence. He took out his purse and handled seven new sovereigns before Biddy's eyes. "I'm awfully afraid I 'ave no silver, missis." Biddy's eye had already caught sight of several silver coins in the purse. Mr. Sharp then fumbled in his pockets and produced three halfpence. "Here, missis," said he. "I'm awfully sorry I 'ave only gold and some bank notes. This is the only loose change I've got Awfully sorry."

"Well, 'tis aisy tellin'," muttered Biddy to herself as she proceeded on her way. "'Tis aisy tellin' that the mane dhrop is in him—the spindle-shanked "cawboge" (cábóg), an' I seen heaps o' silver. Wisha, 'twill be bad luck wud the girl that gets him. The divil take him for a miserable craiture, God forgive me for sayin' so."

At this moment Hannah's one eye shot its light from behind the door, and in a few moments afterwards Mr. Herbert Sharp was ushered into the parlour.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH A HIGHLY RESPECTABLE YOUNG ANGLO-IRISH LADY IS LAID SIEGE TO BY A SAXON.

Miss Alice saw every thing through a haze of sentimentality, that is to say, she never saw anything fair and square in her life, and when she contemplated what we call love, she looked at it through the eyes of the heroines of penny fiction, of which she was a great devourer. Her heart was beating—or, at least she put her hand a little to the left of it, where the penny novels place that organ of the human body, as if it were beating—and she peeped from the corner of the screen at the Englishman who was in conversation with this undeserving Irish beggarwoman in the street. She contemplated the noble and well-bred condescension of this thorough gentleman in talking to a lowly beggar, and compared it with the ignorance of Dr. Sullivan who described Biddy as a low, lying, cringing hag, and quoted the saying that, "Alms deeds breed beggars." Poor Biddy; horrible Dr. Sullivan! But then, what did he know; what could he know?—the son of an Irish farmer. There was something so refined and nice and quiet about an Englishman. In this

fashion were her thoughts running when the door opened, and Mr. Herbert Sharp entered the room.

This was his first visit to the house, for all their previous meetings had been out of doors, and there was much anxiety in the kitchen where Mrs. O'Kelly and Miss Mary had taken refuge. Mrs. O'Kelly was afraid that the head of the house might turn up, and Miss Mary was all of a tremble that something or other in direct violation of the laws and customs of genteel Society would occur.

A volume of "Byron's Poems" lay open on the table, and "Shakespeare's Works" and "Milton's Works" were not far off; the penny novelette in which Miss Alice was actually interested was thrust out of sight in the crease of the sofa. She had had time when she darted up to her room to arrange herself most carefully, so as to present a careless appearance, and when Mr. Sharp made a low bow at the door, Miss Alice rose from the sofa, rubbed her eyes, said that she had been taking her mid-day *siesta*, and that he was the last person in the world she had expected to see at such a time.

"I hope," she added, "that you will overlook my untidy appearance."

A picture which Miss Alice, with the help of the drawing master, had put together, lay in a prominent position on the mantlepiece. It purported to represent "Brutus running on his sword." It was

the first thing which Mr. Sharp admired. He smiled in a sickly manner at it, wondered who did it? Curious character that Brutus, haw! haw! Now the sickly smile on Mr. Sharp's face struck Miss Alice at once as indicative that his eye had caught sight of some flaw in the picture, some want of truth to history, and she secretly admired the gentlemanly instinct that bade him keep the matter to himself; for when James Fitzgerald was first shown this work of art he immediately pointed out that the sword emerged at least two inches below where it ought to have come out. That, of course, had been mended since, and on this occasion the sword came out in the right place.

Miss Alice fell in love with that sickly smile. But the fact was that poor Mr. Sharp didn't exactly know how learned or how shallow Miss Alice was, and he moved gingerly about accordingly. He had often come across the name of Brutus, and had some faint recollection of him since his school-days. But since Mr. Sharp left school his reading was confined to his daily paper, and to "The Pink Un" and "Tit-Bits." He was glad to drop Brutus. But, unhappily, the poets whose works lay on the table inviting comment, were likewise outside the scope of his reading. Miss Alice, on the other hand, had a smattering of all, particularly Byron; and she was all on an edge to parade her knowledge. Byron

was generally looked askance at, even by the intellectual minority of Ballytown, who were otherwise known as the Literary, Scientific and Archæological Society. Miss Alice, one of whose prominent affectations was to pose as original, swore by Byron; and the common impression that his morals were not beyond reproach, only made her stand up the more for him, for she was a student of the old, old art of being conventionally unconventional, and she was not averse to occupying the position of martyr in a mild form when a little notoriety was to be gained thereby. Mr. Sharp was uncomfortable, and he was wondering if Miss Alice was on the border of despising his empty head.

"Which are your favourite poets, Mr. Sharp?" asked Alice.

"Well, aw, aw," replied Mr. Sharp, as he put one leg over the other and then reversed the process, "fact is, don't you know, there are so many poets one reads, one finds it difficult to say which is—aw, aw—you know what I mean."

"Ah," said Miss Alice, as she tried to give herself a rapt and enthusiastic expression, "Byron is my poet *par excellence.* He is so harshly judged by narrow-minded people."

"Well, yes, there is something in that, certainly," and Mr. Sharp looked profoundly before him as if he was thinking of something.

"By the way," said he, after a pause, for he was desperately anxious to change the trend of the conversation, "By the way, are you going to the races at—aw, aw—oh, what's that awful Oirish name—Bally, Bally—— Everything in Ireland is Bally," and Mr. Sharp broke into a weak giggle at this joke which he had used at least twenty times since his arrival in the country.

"Yes," said Miss Alice, when she had finished her soft peal of silvery laughter which was always on hand to be let off, "Yes, but let's talk about poets, the people here can't understand me, and it is such a pleasure to meet someone with whom one can talk about literature and poetry. How grand it must be, Mr. Sharp, to reside in England, the people are all so nice and clever. Of course, a few of the people here are not half bad, but——"

At this moment a knock was heard at the door, and Alice, into whose head several dreadful possibilities flashed, coloured slightly as she called out, "Come in."

The door opened, and the upper part of the domestic servant's body appeared in sight. Her face was shiny from a very recent wash, a wash which stopped abruptly at the points where her neck commenced. Miss Mary, who, above all things, was determined to uphold the respectability of the family, insisted upon putting one of Miss Alice's

fancy cast-off pinafores on her, and a piece of linen neatly arranged by way of a cap on her head before she showed herself in the presence of the visitor. The domestic servant, when she looked in through the door, appeared very nervous and sheepish.

"Plaise, Miss Alice, the misthress tould me to axe if you've the kay o' the sideboard."

Miss Alice took in the situation at once, and knew that Miss Mary had sent the servant to ask this superfluous question, in order to show the visitor that the family had a domestic with an apron and a cap. She fumbled in her pocket and then replied:

"Tell motha' that she will probably discova the key either in my davenport or hanging on the easel in my boudoir."

The poor servant looked very puzzled on receiving this information, and she was evidently about to say something further, for she didn't understand many words of the reply, when the fear of the unknown became too strong for her, and she at the same time became conscious that she had a fancy apron and a cap on her. She drew the upper part of her body out of the room and shut the door. The first thing she did when she was safe in the hall, was to take off the cap and apron.

"H'm," said she to herself, "a person can't go about now like a dacent human being, but she must have a bit of a clane dish-cloth on her head. Glory

be to God, what's the world coming to at all, at all!"

Mrs. O'Kelly, who found it difficult to keep her countenance when Miss Mary was dressing up the servant, and had been laughing ever since she left the kitchen, now tried to regain her composure as she heard the maid servant's step approaching.

"Well," she asked, as the domestic appeared with "a lip on her," and the apron in one hand and the cap in the other, "did you get the key?"

"Wisha, indeed, an' I didn't; sure, Miss Alice is spakin' 'English,' ma'am, and I couldn't undherstand wan word out of her mouth."

The domestic servant then dropped into a mutter on her own grievances about the cap and apron, and the folly of the world generally.

"What fools young ladies do be making of themselves before men. Wisha, an' he's a mane looking bit of a boy, too, God help him. 'Tis a wondher now, ma'am, that Miss Alice wouldn't clap her eye on a fine hearty lump of a man."

"Now don't be making answers and forgetting your place," retorted Mrs. O'Kelly. "I won't have it."

We must now return to Mr. Sharp and Miss Alice. We do it with fear and trembling, for we have a task before us at which our confidence in our ability to do it justice fails. Mr. Sharp, an Englishman, is in love, and with that recklessness characteristic of

his race, he is about to take a leap at the dictates of his passion. The Irish are so full of soul, and the stirring of feeling within them is such an everyday occurrence, that they will seldom take any important step at its behest; whilst the Saxon, to whom emotion is a novelty, is carried away by it at the first assault. The Irish are really cooler than the English, for what passes for coolness in the latter is in reality dulness. And we know no more mawkish or absurd sight than an Englishman, an English sect, or the English nation, in all the *abandon* of an attack of sentimental feeling. They take their sentiment very seriously in England. Mr. Sharp was never more solemn in his life than when, having successfully overcome the obstacles represented by Brutus and the poets, he sat down by the side of Miss Alice and braced his courage to the sticking place.

The scene that was then enacted has been portrayed with such consummate skill, from the various lifting of the eyebrows to the heaving of sighs, in a thousand penny and higher-priced novels that we doubt not but that our gentle readers know all its shades and colours to a nicety. While Mr. Sharp was dilating upon his prospects in life, and drawing a picture of domestic felicity in a semi-detached villa of a London suburb, Miss Alice hid her blushes from view. What a triumph over Ballytown! She

saw the scowls of the Misses Williams; she heard the futile sneers of Miss Flanagan; she would be even at last with Dr. Sullivan upon whom all her arts had failed.

When Mr. Herbert Sharp, who had been talking and acting all this time, strictly in accordance with the most approved rules relating to such an enterprise as he was engaged in, concluded that the time had come for the finishing stroke, he drew his handkerchief from his pocket and laid it on the ground. The moment he looked at the white square upon the carpet, some vague sense which rarely stirred in him, prompted him to take it back again. He then pretended to blow his nose in it and subsequently put it back into his pocket.

When he had worked up his feelings to the proper pitch again, he abruptly blurted out—"Oh, Alice, will you be mine?"

For what Alice said and did, and for the general scene that ensued, we—feeling how inadequate are our abilities to rise to the occasion—refer our readers to any of the London penny periodicals and six-shilling novels which are read in such numbers in Ballytown and elsewhere in Anglo-Ireland.

There was great commotion in the O'Kelly household on the night of the day during which the romantic occurrences just related took place, and it

was agreed that the work of breaking the news to the head of the house should be delayed until dinner the following day; that was about an hour previous to the time when Mr. Herbert Sharp was to come to speak to papa. Mrs. O'Kelly declared that she would not be the one to break the news, and Dr. Andrew said it was no business of his. At last Miss Mary volunteered to step into the breach.

"Are ye done?" said Mrs. O'Kelly to Tom, Peter, and Kitty the following day at dinner, "because if ye are, let ye run out in the garden and play."

Miss Alice did not make an appearance at dinner at all; she had lost her appetite—as other heroines have usually done under like circumstances—and contented herself with some plates of cold meat, tea and bread and butter in the kitchen. There was an air of suppressed excitement about Mrs. O'Kelly and Miss Mary when they found themselves unsupported, facing the head of the house. Miss Mary began:—

"I wonder did you see the visitor the Wilkins-Joneses have staying with him."

"Is it that pale-faced chap in the high hat?" retorted the head of the house sarcastically. "I never seen such sport as yestherday, an' he walking down the Main Street an' three barefooted gosoons behind him taking him off. Ould Mrs. Flavin had like to die wud the laughin."

This was an unsatisfactory start.

"But he's from London," said Miss Mary, "an' he's very well-to-do."

"Maurya!" (mar eadh) retorted Patrick, "cows far off have long horns. I'd like to see the man ud be fool enough to give him thirty shillings a week."

Mrs. O'Kelly's face fell at this, and she whispered to Miss Mary that it would be better wait until he was in a different humour.

"But we can't," whispered back Miss Mary, "the man 'll be here in a few minutes."

"Well, I hope it's for the best," whispered Mrs. O'Kelly, trying to look resigned.

"He's taken quite a strong liking to Alice," continued Miss Mary.

"What!" interjected Patrick, as an angry look came into his face. "Now that 'll do; we don't want any of that kind of talk, so dhrop it now."

Oh," said Mary in a fit of desperation, "I may as well tell it out at once. He has asked Alice to marry him."

It is a great mistake to suppose that when startling tidings are related to a man that the hair stands up straight on his head, or that he rises in a dramatic manner and flashes fire from his eyes. The information conveyed by Miss Mary to the head of the house had a cooling and subduing effect on him. He drew his knife from his pocket and commenced

to cut his roll tobacco in silence. It was not until he was rubbing it between his hands that he looked up and said: —

"It's jokin' y'are."

"Indeed, an' it isn't," said Mrs. O'Kelly, who didn't mind having her say now that the ice was broken, and that Patrick had taken the news so quietly. "He proposed to her yesterday, and he's comin' to talk to you in a few minutes."

"To talk to me," said Patrick, with a twinkle kindling in his eye.

"Yes," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"Is he a Catholic?" asked Patrick.

"No, but he's willin' to turn," replied Mrs. O'Kelly.

"How do ye know but he has two or three wives already," asked Patrick.

"Oh, he's related to Mrs. Wilkins-Jones," joined in Miss Mary.

"Faith, an' she's no great shakes herself," retorted Patrick, and then added—"Tell me how old is this Alice is?"

"She was twenty-one her last birthday," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"Ha, well 'twill be time enough for her to have notions of marryin' when she's seven or eight and twenty; there's Mary there, an' she's thirty-wan, and nobody has come for her yet. It's a good batin'

wud a strap that Alice ud want for her gallavantin about wud chaps that no wan knows anything of. That'll do now. Don't say another word," continued Patrick, lifting up his hand as he noticed that Mrs. O'Kelly was about to make some remark. "Lave it to me, an' I'll give this gossoon his answer quick enough."

"Well, me boy," said Patrick O'Kelly, as he entered the parlour where Mr. Herbert Sharp was awaiting him, "what might be your business wud me?"

"I called, sir, to speak to you about—that is to say, with reference to—well, aw, I suppose you have heard—you know what I mean."

"Well, I needn't thank you for that, supposing I do," said Patrick, sarcastically. "You're the chap that wants to marry Alice?"

"That is so," said Mr. Sharp, with an inclination of the head.

"Well, look id here, sonny, the sooner you take that notion out o' yer head, the better."

"Really, Mr. OKelly," began Mr. Sharp, "I'm not used to——"

"I don't give a damn what yer used to," said Patrick, hotly. "But I tell you this, if there wasn't another man undher the canopy of heaven, I wouldn't have the likes o' you about me house. How the divil do I know but you've got a wife already."

"I'm in a most awkward position. Really, I must protest," said Mr. Sharp.

"Well you'll be in an awkwarder wan if you don't clear off wud yerself at wance out of this. Yer room is betther than yer company, me boy."

"I'll not be insulted, sir, in this outrageous manner."

"Do you know what it is—you had the divil's impidence puttin' notions into my daughter's head, and if I'd caught you walkin' wud her you wouldn't be plaized wud yerself, I can tell you."

"Really, sir——"

"That'll do, now, I don't want any more argufying wud you. Without a contradiction there's no argument, so dhrop it now, an' go out o' me house quietly, like a good boy, and don't ever let me see yer face again."

"You haven't heard the end of this, sir; I call it outrageous," protested Mr. Sharp, as he moved towards the door.

"Call it what ye like, me bucko, so long as you get out quick," said Patrick, as he slammed the door on the excited young British gentleman.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH A HIGHLY RESPECTABLE ANGLO-IRISH MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED AND TAKES PLACE.

We are afraid that many of our readers will be dissatisfied at the manner in which we conduct them through this history. Some of them will no doubt expect us to tell them all about poetic Miss Alice, what her father said to her, how she lay awake of nights and threatened to drown herself in the morning, and how by the aid of a piece of paper secreted in the collar of her pet dog she had a communication delivered from the house—within the limits of which she was kept—to her devoted and harshly treated lover, who in his turn swore and threatened many things. But we cannot stay to dwell upon these matters, for there is more portentous work about. Miss Mary is being laid siege to. Therefore, our readers must, for the present at least, remain content to know that after a week Mr. Sharp returned to England, and in three weeks Miss Alice went on a long visit to Dublin to her maiden aunt, Miss Maguire, who kept a small drapery shop. And whether Miss Alice will eventually marry Mr. Sharp or a middle-aged Dublin butcher, or keep

true to poetry and literature and join the chorus of the "Celtic Note," are questions which our readers may, if they choose, exercise their speculative powers upon.

For many years it was the custom of Tom, Peter and Kitty to kneel down and offer up a prayer that some one would come and take Miss Mary. Miss Mary being the eldest of fourteen—six of whom had died young—she was twenty-one years older than Tom. Miss Mary, unfortunately, was very self-conscious of being extremely religious and virtuous —and therefore some of Tom's first impressions of religion and virtue were none of the brightest. Tom would run into a rat-hole from her; and in order to save the bread—for she had one or two economical notions—she persuaded Peter and Kitty that the eating of crumbs was an infallible way of attaining wisdom. Tom didn't care two straws for attaining wisdom at this time, nor was he conscious that by refusing to eat crumbs on any such flimsy pretence he was demonstrating that he possessed some already. Miss Mary also got Tom, Peter and Kitty to save up their pennies in a great big stocking, and when they had five-and-sixpence all told, and were thinking of what they would do with it, Miss Mary lifted up her eyes in holy horror at the idea of three children being allowed the free use of such a large sum of money, so she divided the

pence amongst them and kept the odd shillings for herself. Miss Mary was in every way a great stumbling-block to the happiness of the three youngsters, and the prospect that anyone would come and take her was, alas, a forlorn one. One day, however, Tom came to the other two with his eyes wide open like saucers.

"Oh," said he, "if you saw what I saw."

And unable to contain himself he stood on his head in the arm-chair and let himself slip on to the carpet. In vain Peter and Kitty pressed round him for information. It was a luxury for Tom to be important, and he wanted to draw it out as long as possible. At last Peter threatened to break his mouth if he wouldn't tell, and Kitty said she'd let out how he smoked a cane the day before yesterday.

Tom wasn't to be drawn further than:—"Oh, if you only knew," and turned another somersault.

At length he relented. In a whisper the great information came out. "I saw Mary walkin' wud a boy."

For a week afterwards these three little people carried themselves like opera bouffe conspirators; and Kitty was tempted to put her ear to the keyhole one evening after the order, "Now, children, go into the other room," had been given.

When the approaching marriage was definitely arranged the three dropped off their practice of praying for this desirable consummation. But one night

the three went down reverently upon their knees—at Tom's suggestion—and offered up a prayer for the man. Miss Mary had been a member of a non-sectarian charity committee, and learned there a new way of laying a serviette upon the table. As the reader already knows her education had been neglected, and she was taking lessons in French from Mrs. Tierney, and woe to Patsy, the coachman, if he was found with his arms uncrossed. Nothing kept Miss Mary from playing up altogether to the manners of the "county people" but her neglected education and plain Patrick O'Kelly. She sneered at the Hon. Tony Trench's sisters, but no sooner did they adopt some new-fangled fashion than Patrick O'Kelly had no peace until he permitted Miss Mary to be as good as they.

One day, Miss Mary drove past Miss Maher's grocery shop with a more queenly air than usual. For the day before James Doyle, the man-milliner, who heard that she had been seen going into O'Donnell's shop in Patrick Street, told her that he heard it said that she was the finest whip in the county. Mr. Benjamin Moloney looked out through the screen and caught sight of her. Mr. Moloney spent a lot of his time in Miss Maher's grocery shop. Miss Maher was a pious maiden lady who sold whiskey without a licence.

"Well," said Miss Maher, "I have heard it said that you are a lucky man, but what I say is that the son of James Moloney is as good any day as the daughter of Patrick O'Kelly."

Benjamin rubbed down both sides of his carefully oiled head and waited for more. Miss Maher proceeded: "But I will say this, that Miss O'Kelly is the best match in the town, and sure it is no wonder at all that people would be jealous of you."

"Oh, railey now, Miss Maher, you're only sayin' that."

The conversation was interrupted at this point by the entrance of a small boy with a bottle and sixpence. "Please, ma'am, me father sent me for a glass o' whiskey an' tu'pence change."

"Go home, me little boy, an' tell your father that we don't sell whiskey here," replied Miss Maher.

"Well, Mr. Moloney," continued she, when the boy had disappeared, "I'm only telling you the plain truth, and you know I wouldn't tell a lie——."

"Oh, indeed, I know that very well, Miss Maher," said Mr. Moloney.

"Well, it's what I hear people sayin'. But I say that if she is the best match it's no compliment for her—an' I say it to your face—it's no compliment for her to marry one of the handsomest and best conducted gentlemen in the town."

"Oh, railey, Miss Maher; railey, you're only sayin' that," stammered Mr. Moloney, blushing.

"It's only the truth. Everyone says you look like an officer."

Mr. Moloney, who was a master-tailor by trade, would do anything for you if you told him he looked like an officer, and he was known to have given 2s. 6d. to a private of an English line regiment who had given him a military salute. Miss Maher knew how to smooth her customers down the right way, and indeed Mr. Moloney was by no means lacking in the Anglo-Irish gift of pretending not to see unpleasant facts, for he invariably appeared to take the greatest interest in listening to the oft-told tale of the three proposals of marriage with which Miss Maher had been favoured.

Miss Maher had a great dislike in her heart for Patrick O'Kelly, for on the only occasion that she ventured to hint to him that she had got one such offer, Patrick surveyed her homely face with an amused smile, and then exclaimed, "Wisha, God save Ireland."

The expression of that patriotic wish, under the particular circumstances, cut Miss Maher to the quick.

Miss Mary, unlike Miss Alice, cared nothing for the poets, though she often quoted Shakespeare from a birthday book. More prosaic matters occupied her attention. She was during these, her love-making days, busily engaged in annexing large

portions of the furniture under the paternal roof, and she was running up bills at the drapers for all manner of superfluous things. For it was arranged that she should get £500 fortune—though the public had it that it was either four or five times as much—and Miss Mary argued that the more she bought on Patrick O'Kelly's account while she yet had time, the better for her. We set down these prosy particulars, for there was nothing in the way of romance about Miss Mary—she looked upon all that sort of thing as highly improper.

The love-making was of the most formal character. In the evening after the usual visit to Miss Maher's shop, Mr. Moloney would give three taps at the parlour window, and Tom and Kitty—if they were within ear-shot—would have a struggle to get to the door first. And the readers must decide for themselves whether this eagerness on the part of Tom and Kitty was in consequence of their regard for Mr. Moloney, or of the fact that he invariably gave a penny to the one who let him in.

Mr. Moloney would sit in a corner of the room, pouting out his upper lip and stroking the moustache that adorned it, and smoothing his sleek, oily hair between his hands. Miss Mary would be at the opposite corner doing needlework, or on an occasion thumping, "What are the wild waves saying," on the piano. Mrs. O'Kelly and the rest of

the family, except the head of the house and Dr. Andrew, would carry on the conversation, Mr. Moloney now and again chiming in with "Railey now, you're only saying that," or "You don't say so." Tom and Kitty usually sat together in the big arm-chair, whispering to one another; and one night Tom was sent to bed without his supper, because during a sudden lull in the conversation he was heard remarking to Kitty:—"Well, that's the queerist coortin' I ever heard of."

The O'Kellys carried themselves very proudly for some days after it was decided that the marriage should take place in Dublin, and even Tom was so affected by the prospect before the family that one day after school, when he had been worsted in a fight with Patsy Casey, the engine-driver's son, he wiped blood from his nose, and setting his teeth at Patsy defiantly declared:—

"Well, your ould father can't afford to send you to Dublin to see yer sisther married."

This remark of Tom is not set down so much to illustrate the petty pride of boyhood as to indicate the trend of opinion in the O'Kelly family. Nora Fitzgerald was snubbed point blank by Kitty, because her mother took in lodgers; and, indeed, Kitty's accent all of a sudden underwent a strange development.

The days before the departure were days of

crowded incident. Mr. Moloney came down one evening after dark, buttoned up to the neck in his overcoat, which, with much blushing, he opened and displayed a pair of new lavender trousers on his nether limbs. Miss Mary ordered visiting cards. She paid for them out of her pocket-money, because, had they appeared in the bill, Patrick O'Kelly might get desperate at evidence of such "damn nonsense," and even the very wedding might never have come off. Tom was in disgrace for some part of the time, for a pair of shoes with pink rosettes on them were bought for him, and one evening he was discovered cutting the rosettes off with a scissors.

"Sure the boys would all be laughin' at me an' callin' me a Miss Molly if I went out in the like of them," he said to his mother who caught him red-handed.

Several books on "How to Behave" and "Manners of Polite Society" were read by Miss Mary, and Mr. Moloney was duly informed of the points which were likely to affect him.

At last the eve of the wedding came, and the family landed at the railway terminus in Dublin. There were also Uncle Michael and his wife. The latter only consented to come after a long struggle with herself. She wanted badly to see the shops, and Stephen's Green and Grafton Street, but, on the

other hand, Michael had kept his last pledge for seven months and it would be a great temptation to him to be in a great big city without anyone to watch him when he might slip out.

Mr. Michael O'Kelly was a fine, all-round man—a town councillor and a patriot. But he was the devil entirely when he broke the pledge. He had kept the last pledge for seven months, which was the longest on record, with the exception of once when he remained sober for exactly a year and a-half. That was as far back as '48-49, at which troublesome period of his country's history the Government put him in jail for eighteen months.

It took three cabs to take the family to the hotel on the Quay, where rooms had been engaged. Miss Mary's *trousseau* was on the top of the last cab. It was rolled up in a large sheet, Miss Mary having decided that she would wait until she got to Dublin to buy the latest fashion in the way of trunks.

The night of their arrival in Dublin the family decided—with the exception of Mr. Michael O'Kelly and, of course, his wife—that they would all go to the theatre. Uncle Michael got into conversation with John, the waiter, early in the evening, and when he discovered that he was speaking to a man who had also suffered for his country in '48 there was no getting him to the theatre. Mrs. Michael seized the first opportunity that offered to slip a

shilling into John's hand and whisper to him confidentially that Mr. Michael was a little peculiar when "he took a sup," and how he "wasn't touching anything" just then.

John made a very expressive face in answer to this whisper.

"Trust me, ma'am, I perfectly comprehend. Between you and me, ma'am, I met many a case like that—seen six men not able to hould down me own brother, Larry. Don't say another word, ma'am, I undherstand."

With that he darted off, and left poor Mrs. Michael O'Kelly pacing up and down the corridor, now and then peeping through the doorway of the room in which they were talking.

Two cabs were ordered for the rest of the family, and they started for the Gaiety. One of the cabs—as sometimes occurs in Dublin—was very shaky, and Mr. Moloney turned pale at the first lurch.

"My goodness," said Mr. Moloney, catching at Miss Mary's arm, "if it does that again I'll get out and walk."

Tom and Peter, who were in this cab, had great sport all the journey, watching Mr. Moloney's face. In Ballytown it was the dearest seats or nothing with Miss Mary, but it was arranged this night that the family were to go to the pit, for, as Miss Mary said, "No one knows us here."

The next morning the marriage took place, and four carriages, two cabs, and a side-car, brought the party back to the hotel where the wedding breakfast was laid in a style far surpassing the furthest dreams of Miss Mary. As Miss Mary, that was, entered the hall, covered in acres of white—whether of silk, satin, or muslin we know not—John, the waiter, addressed her as "ma'am," and Tom, who was hard by, saw, for the first time in his life, a blush suffusing the substantial cheeks of his sister.

Whether there was any ceremony observed in the manner of entering the breakfast room, Tom was in ignorance, for the sweet-cakes with inches of frost on them, and the cold chickens in pink papers, absorbed all his attention the moment he entered the room; and he was the first to enter, for he had an idea that there might be things on the table that would conveniently fit in his pockets.

Mrs. O'Kelly sat down in fear and trembling, for what with the different sized forks, and steel knives and silver knives and spoons she was utterly bewildered, and was afraid to touch anything for fear, as she afterwards admitted, that "she might commit herself." There was another struggle going on in her mind, and that was, whether it would be the same to pay however much was disposed of. At last she came to the conclusion that all the things in the way of cakes and chickens that were left un-

touched would be excluded from the bill. She ordered affairs accordingly, and all the whole chickens and cakes that it was possible to keep in their entirety—without stinting, of course, for Mrs. O'Kelly had not one ungenerous strain in her—were so kept.

Alas, if we may anticipate, her efforts at economy were in vain, for she was soon to find out that had the table been cleared it were not the worse on Patrick's pocket. This fact became one of the standing regrets of Mrs. O'Kelly in after years, and we doubt if ever subsequently she heard a hen cackle or a cock crow that she did not heave a sigh for all those untouched but fully paid for chickens.

Uncle Michael was in no way confused by the unaccustomed amount of cutlery. He bundled it all up with the exception of the largest knife and fork, and, with a "Wisha, God give them better sense an' me more money," he laid them on the nearest side table.

"I'm damn dhry," said he then, and, leaning across the table, he took hold of a silver milk jug and was about to put it to his lips when Mrs. Michael gave him a violent nudge.

"What are ye nudging me for?" asked Michael, quite loudly. "Sure ye know I'm touching nothing for the last seven months, an' a man must dhrink something."

With that he drained the jug. "Faith, that's betther milk than I thought you'd get in Dublin now," said he, laying down the empty jug.

Mrs. Mary Moloney looked daggers, and said that she wished he would remember that there were strange waiters about, and Mr. Moloney frowned and rubbed his glossy poll between his hands.

Things weren't going altogether evenly with Patrick either. He was thinking of the power of money he was spending, and Michael Connors or Bob Corcoran or any of the people of Ballytown not knowing anything about it. But the waiters, standing behind his chair, looking at every bit he put into his mouth, was what principally was getting on Patrick's nerves. Though Patrick was a wealthy man and a spirited one, he had very little sense of social distinction, and he would talk his mind to a fishwoman as readily as to the chairman of the Ballytown Board of Guardians. The waiters were annoying him, and their pastey, washed-out-looking faces, and their dress, made him instinctively class them with the same type and race to which belonged the Hon. Tony Trench and Sir Percy Hawhaw, the *ex-officios*. Patrick O'Kelly felt in his heart that he was no friend of any of that breed, so they had better not provoke him.

These thoughts were vaguely running through his mind when he laid down his knife and fork to take

a short rest before commencing anew. At this moment the waiter, drawing his own conclusions from Patrick's action, took the plate suddenly away. This was the last straw. Patrick rose to his feet with flashing eye, a knife in one hand and a fork in the other.

"Be heavens, if you don't give back that plate I'll stretch ye," exclaimed Patrick.

And in a moment the family was around him and Mrs. Moloney put her hand over his mouth and told him not to disgrace the family "opposite" strange waiters.

"I won't ate another bit till them boyos clear out o' the room," shouted Patrick. "I'll not have it—lookin' at every bit wan puts into their mouth—it isn't Christian."

There was no way out of it but to give in to Patrick, and Dr. Andrew, therefore, asked the waiters to withdraw. The breakfast then proceeded without further remarkable incident.

Dr. Andrew made a speech, Tom spilt the tea on his new velvet knickers, and Uncle Michael got up when he had had enough, saying:—"I'll lave ye now an' go an' have a smoke," whilst Mr. Patrick O'Kelly, after running his thumb against several knives, selected one and proceeded to cut his plug of Irish roll, Dr. Andrew observing which, and dreading the consequences, suggested that it was about time to adjourn.

The next day's *Freeman* contained an advertisement announcement of the marriage, in which it was stated that the happy couple left for London *en route* for Italy. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to state that the happy couple changed their minds, and did not, as a matter of fact, go beyond the English Capital. There Mr. Moloney purchased some cheap lines in shoddy; and the happy pair returned to Ballytown at the end of a fortnight.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH PETER WRITES A LETTER TO THE PAPER, AND THE IDEA OF A GREAT LITERARY SOCIETY IS MOOTED.

WITH Miss Mary and Miss Alice gone from the household, and Patrick O'Kelly suffering from the re-action of his extravagant burst, the world looked somewhat grey to Tom. Kitty had the millinery shops to go to, where she got a threepenny ribbon for sixpence and half an hour's gossip for nothing. Peter was a revolutionist, carried a revolver because the law forbade it, read all the speeches and the news in the papers, argued with men three times his age, and "made eyes" at girls. But poor Tom would run a mile from a girl, and lacked altogether the self-assertiveness of Peter. His great friend was Patsy. Tom would spend hours with Patsy, cheering him up and helping him, for Patsy was in dread of his life of "the masther" who, indeed, beyond calling him "a damn amadhaun" (amadán) and pitching him "to the divil" very frequently, did not treat him ungenerously. But being called an omadhaun weighed heavily on Patsy, and consequently twice as heavily on little Tom, who conceived the greatest pity and sympathy for Patsy's hard

lot. Tom would clean the harness for him and help to wash the cars; he spent a good deal of his pocket money buying roll tobacco for him, and would sit for hours in the cold, listening to him trolling out verse after verse about "Bould young Willie Brennan, young Brennan on the moor," and other verses celebrating the exploits of Donnelly, the prize-fighter.

In those days Tom did his best to bend his legs bow-wise, so as to appear like a jockey. One thing which Patsy—who was, at the time we speak of, twenty-one years of age—could not understand at all was the fondness which some people appeared to have for drink.

"That goes past me altogether, Masther Tom. It's queer how people do be makin' eejuts of themselves dhrinkin' all their wages. I can undherstand smokin' or a bit o' fightin'—there's raison in them—but dhrinkin'—well, anyhow, that's a thing I could never do."

As Tom used to look up with admiration at Patsy while he delivered himself of these sentiments, it never struck his young mind that he would live to see the day when it took three policemen to take Patsy to the "Lock-up." Patsy's fighting days are over now, and no doubt at the present moment, while he can fully understand why men drink, he cannot see any reason whatever in fighting.

There was a constant feud between a neighbouring maid of all work and Patsy in those days, and it showed great native tact on the part of Tom that he kept on good terms with both. Patsy once addressed Lizzie—for that was the maid of all work's name—as: "Ye yallow-faced slut," and Lizzie referred to Patsy in the latter's hearing as "that bandy-legged gossoon wud a head like a sugaun o' hay."

Patrick O'Kelly looked down upon both with impartiality, and expressed his general view of them by the remark:—"When God made ye, He matched ye." Both were undeveloped philosophers, and from their crude reflections upon life Tom learned many things which they forgot to teach him in school. Patsy saw through politicians and Lizzie saw through men. Though it is only right to remark that the former once "followed a horse" for a Patriotic Member of Parliament, and that the appearance of the latter might be guaranteed to keep her as safe from harm as if she were enclosed in a glass case.

It was very easy to draw Patsy on the local political leaders.

"Wisha, Masther Tom, an' I comin' from Mass last Sunday, who d'ye think was spaching on the Square but long Micky Flynn—the bla'guard an' he to be talkin'—what the hell do he know—a poor

ignorant man, no betther than meself, only that he married an ould woman wud a butcher's shop. They're the ruin o' the counthry, Masther Tom. An' he to be called a great hairo be the head o' all the Laigue. Look id here, if 'twas the divil himself was in id, an' he to side with that boy, he'd call him a hairo. I don't say but there's right in a grea' deal o' what they talk about, but would Micky Flynn or Long Corcoran hould out in a fight like Michael Dwyer? Yerrah, it's purty they'd look before a bayonet. I don't say but if I saw a bayonet meself it's what I'd do is cut an' run, but then I don't be blattherin' like them chaps. Arrah, Masther Tom, they're not the men that was in it in the time o' the Rapparees. Hould that bucket a minit—be aisy there, wud yer kickin', it's too much oats yer havin'; a bit of soft feedin' is what ye want—'Oh, bould young Willie Brennan, young Brennan on the moor.' But, as I was sayin' I was listenin' to the head o' the Laige talkin', mighty fine language it was certainly, for I couldn't undherstand the wan half of it, but there was a counthry chap got up afther an' he begin to talk. Wan thing he said was that he'd put a raw spud down the gullet of the first peeler he met. Arrah, you should hear the laughin'. Sure, 'twas coddin' he was all the time, but none o' them could stop him, and the people would raither be listenin' to him than all the Members o' Parliament in the counthry."

However, Tom thought very little about Patsy's opinions, for he was willing to believe at this time that all the politicians were heroes; and he knew that Patsy had a personal grievance against one of the Patriots.

Lizzie had no views on politics, and indeed she came to Tom one day and, after exacting from him a promise that he would not on any account tell Patsy what she was going to say, whispered: —

"Tell me, Masther Tom, what is politics?"

Lizzie was an elderly servant maid who had practically never been with more than one family. The highly respectable Anglo-Irish family frequently draws to itself a servant maid of that description. They begin after long years to get fond of her, as they might of an old cat—and in some cases they don't fail to treat her like one. Lizzie could neither read nor write, but she always brought her prayer-book to Mass on Sunday, and she would be sure to be sulky all the evening should anyone look over her shoulder at church and whisper to her that she had the prayer-book upside-down. Lizzie invariably backed into a sulky temper when she was reminded that she could not read, for she had so often "purtended" that she could, that in a hazy kind of way she forgot that she couldn't.

During the three occasions whilst Lizzie was dismissed from Mrs. Corcoran's "far makin' answers

and givin' impidence," she could get no other family to keep her for more than a fortnight.

"How do ye feed her at all?" asked Mrs. Casey of Mrs. Corcoran, one Sunday shortly after the former had had a fortnight's trial of the maid.

"Why, I declare to ye, she'd eat an elephant if he was boiled wud cabbage."

With all her faults the Corcorans felt very strange during the three periods that Lizzie was absent; and once, when they had a smart town girl with a cap and apron, who spoke without a long drawl, Mrs. Corcoran was in a fidget the whole time.

"Why," said she, "I can't feel that the house is me own an' that Maggie flouncin' about here, there an' everywhere; she must have her own dry tea as if it isn't good enough for any servant to add water to what we leave; she must have her night out, and then she dresses up that you wouldn't think but 'twas one of the family she was. I won't keep her another week. After all, there's no one like poor Lizzie. She has her faults, but there is one thing, you can say what you like to her."

And so Lizzie went back. Indeed, the fact that "you can say what you like to poor Lizzie" was one of her invaluable qualifications to the Corcoran's, each member of which family felt the need of someone to aim strong language at.

But Lizzie had another virtue. One day when Mr.

Corcoran brought Dr. Andrew to the house, Mrs. Corcoran apologized before him, and in Lizzie's hearing, for the untidy and slovenly appearance of the latter.

"Over the street," said Mrs. Corcoran, "there is a servant that has twice the work to do, and yet she's always neat and tidy."

Tom, who had been brought in with Dr. Andrew, was in the corner, and he watched Lizzie very closely, for she had often said to him: —

"Well, Masther Tom, of all the things in the world, I hate—even more than to be roasted on a gridiron—it is to be dispraised before strangers."

Lizzie gave one look at Dr. Andrew and one at Mrs. Corcoran, her ruddy skin paled somewhat with excitement and her under lip went out. She made two efforts to "make an answer" as she was going out, but her heart failed her. At the door, however, she turned, and, throwing her head back, played her trump virtue.

"Well, ma'am, whatever I am, ma'am, even an' supposin' I am untidy, ma'am, *I never walked wud a sojer.*"

Notwithstanding Patsy and Lizzie, the world would have remained very grey for Tom, had not Peter, who at this time had active literary ambitions, written a long letter to the "Ballytown Echo." The letter was on the battle of Vinegar Hill, and was

signed "Michael Dwyer." Peter was a great hero when he had read it out to the family. Mrs. O'Kelly gave him a shilling for himself, and Kitty predicted that he might be a great man yet, and Tom felt quite surprised when Peter condescended to ask him a question. Patsy called him "Misther Pether" instead of "Masther Pether," and the old maid servant said that he was impudent enough before, but that since he became a great writer there was no standing him at all.

"An' I drawin' water for the tay, Masther Tom, he 'cruisted' me wud stones until I had like to fall into the well, can an' all."

Peter had his hours of crowded glory, but unsatisfied still, he was looking forward to tea-time for a greater triumph, for at tea-time Patrick O'Kelly was to be shown a letter. Patrick laughed a mocking laugh when he was told that Peter had written to the paper.

"What, Pether write a letther to the paper. Go bate yerself," said he.

"But here it is," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"Where?" asked Patrick.

"There, 'The Battle of Vinegar Hill.'"

Patrick's ire was rising.

"Here, take it away out o' that, I'm in no humour for yer humbuggin'."

"But it's right," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"But it isn't right," said Patrick. "That letther is from Michael Dwyer."

"Oh, aye," said Mrs. O'Kelly; "but that's a *nom-de-plume.*"

"A what?"

"A *nom-de-plume.*"

"I'll believe as much o' that as I like," retorted Patrick, who didn't know what a *nom-de-plume* was.

"Oh, really he did write it," said Kitty.

"God save Ireland," retorted Patrick.

"'Tis mine—on me word an' honour, it is," joined Peter himself.

Patrick surveyed his son for a few moments with an amused smile.

"All right," said he, sarcastically, "it is yours; you wrote the whole paper if that'll plaise ye—without a contradiction there's no argument, so dhrop it now."

Patrick O'Kelly was not to be imposed upon so easily as they thought; and Peter, leaving his tea untouched behind him, went up to bed a sobbing martyr.

Poor Tom's heart bled for Peter, particularly when he heard him sobbing, and as soon as he could slip away he started after him to his room in order to console him. Peter had been looking out of the window at the street below for a quarter of an hour, and had just come to the conclusion that playing martyr in a top bedroom on an empty stomach

was very foolish, when he might be walking with Jamesy Doyle up and down Patrick Street, where lived Miss Jenny Casey, for whom both had a strong attachment, and who sometimes pulled back the blind and smiled upon her two devoted admirers.

He was also contemplating going down in his stocking feet to the kitchen to have the tea he so heroically left behind him, when he heard Tom's step ascending the stairs. Peter, all of a sudden, remembered that he was a martyr.

When Tom entered cautiously into the room he looked round and saw the form of Peter huddled up in a heap on the corner of the bed.

"Pether—Pether, boy—are ye very sad, Pether?" whispered poor Tom and the tears streaming down his face, but there was no answer.

"Are you asleep, Pether?"

The martyr at this juncture allowed himself to utter a deep, mournful groan, and Tom wiped a further tear of pity from his eye.

"I think I'm goin' to die," said Pether.

Tom sat on the edge of the bed, an angel of silent sympathy.

"I'm starvin' wud the hunger," was the next doleful remark of Peter. "I haven't had a bit—not one bit—to eat all day since two o'clock."

"Arrah, don't be talkin' like that, it makes me very sad," said poor Tom, ready to blubber.

"They'll be sorry for me when I'm dead," continued Peter.

"Wisha, don't be goin' on like that," retorted Tom; "sure if ye did write the letther——"

At this point Peter jumped up suddenly and interrupted Tom. "There's no 'if' in id at all. I did write it, I'd swear I did."

"Well, sure an' supposin' you did——" Tom was proceeding to explain when Peter became angry, and interrupting him, exclaimed:—"Look id here, I'll break yer mouth if ye say I'm a liar."

"Arrah, whisht, wud ye," said Tom in a conciliatory voice, "I'm not sayin' you didn't write it, but what good is givin' up your tea an' goin' to bed because pa wouldn't believe it."

This remark caused Peter to reflect.

"Well," said he, "if I'd finished me tea it might have been betther."

And then after a pause he asked:—

"Now, what would you have done if you were in my place?"

"Well," said Tom, deliberately: "I'd have had me tea first anyway, an' be that time I think I'd purtend I didn't mind his not believin' it a bit."

This indirect reflection on Peter's wisdom went home sharply.

"Oh, you're too mane; you haven't any spirit," growled Peter.

This retort got Tom's blood up and he replied with vehemence: —

"I'm not mane at all, an' it isn't spirit to go wudout ye're tea like a fool."

"I'm not a fool," said Peter, standing out on the floor.

"Well, I'm not mane naither," said Tom, standing defiantly before his bigger brother.

Hostilities would have inevitably ensued had not a heavy footfall been heard on the stairs, and Peter drew a long-drawn "hish-h-h" and whispered, "Here's pa," as both boys stole noiselessly towards the bed.

By the time that Tom and Peter discovered that the footsteps were those of Kitty and not of their father, their tempers had cooled down and Tom volunteered to steal down to the kitchen and bring Peter's tea back with him.

"I've got a scheme in me head," said Peter, as he finished the last of his tea out of the saucer. "I'm goin' to start a literary society meself."

Tom's mouth assumed a judicial expression on hearing this, and then feeling that some remark was called for, he said: —

"Oh, are you now?"

"It will be a penny a week subscription, with sixpence at the start," continued Peter, "and there will be poems, debates and lectures."

"Will ye lave me join?" asked Tom, humbly.

"Yes; but you'll have to pay your penny a week the same as us all."

"Who else will be in id?" asked Tom.

Peter thought for some time, as a question of such importance could not be answered off-hand.

"There 'll be Bob McCarthy, Maurice Casey, Jamsey Doyle, yerself and meself, and—well that's all I can think of just now, but we'll have more afther a start. We'll meet every Wednesday night in the old outhouse, and do you be fittin' it up and settlin' the——. Whisht, is that Jamsey Doyle's three whistles outside—it is, begor."

The three whistles scattered the plans of the literary society for that night.

"I must slip down now," said Peter, after he had opened the window and had made signs to Jamsey below in the street.

A few minutes afterwards Peter and Jamesy were strolling down Patrick Street, and Tom went below to the parlour and stretched himself on the sofa to have a good big think over the prospects of Peter's Literary Society.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH PATRICK O'KELLY TAKES TO DRINK AND POLITICS.

We must now leave Tom and Peter for a while and return to the head of the house. Both Patrick and his brother Michael were "touching something" at this time, and Patrick, who was a shrewd, hard-headed man when he was a teetotaler, fell an easy prey to any plausibility in his cups. And this weakness in his character was one reason why he dropped into that state of careless living made up of tippling, speeching, random prophesying, coarse abuse, and almost total abdication of the process of thinking, which in such places as Ballytown is, or was, all summed up or covered up in the one word "politics."

As we already know the head of the house was denied what is called a liberal education. However, he was very well educated within his limits, and in all that concerned oats, corn mills, and such like, he could follow cause to effect, and effect to cause with a directness that was sometimes startling. It is none of our business to speculate as to what he might have become had his mind received a thorough training; we have only to deal with him as he is.

His mind was not equipped for floating much beyond his business concerns, but many temptations and allurements hurried him thitherwards. Very many Irishmen are prone to plunge heedlessly beyond their depths, and perhaps this is a tendency which will always show itself amongst an intelligent but uneducated, or falsely educated, people. Patrick O'Kelly had never thought out, nor was he capable of thinking out, a political problem in all its bearings. Political economy were two words to him and nothing more. He knew nothing of the history of his country; he had no idea what "history" meant. Like most of his countrymen he knew all the surface facts relating to certain episodes, such as the hanging of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, the Siege of Limerick, the Battle of Clontarf, and the fall and repentance of Murty Hynes. History to him was an odd set of facts here, and an odd set of facts there, not a great unfolding of a country's personality, of its weakness and its strength, of its limits and its potentialities. There were few more shrewd men than Patrick O'Kelly when he trusted his own judgment and was within his depth; but when he left his business and his neighbours he fired his mind into the air and became a blind worshipper of shibboleths and of those who uttered them.

One sign of enlightenment and civilization is a general perception of the common human nature that

wraps and limits us all, the philosopher as well as the day labourer. From the same practical level of clay genius rises to its little height, and ignorance burrows to its little depth; to the eye of the Absolute the difference between Shakespeare and the Warwickshire hind is small indeed. A nation is in a sad way when, stepping into the arena called public life, it renounces its judgment and thinking power, and divides itself into a multitude of puppets, who open their eyes with admiring awe at the hieroglyphics which a smaller number of superior puppets write upon the wall.

Into the ranks of the mountebanks Patrick O'Kelly entered with no misgiving on his conscience, for a general state of blindness is one of those things which, though each one helps to contribute to it, no one appears to feel himself responsible for. He and the other leaders of public thought in Ballytown had stout hearts liberally streaked with honesty, and if we are prepared to allow much for vanity and ignorance we will forgive a great deal in the public life of Ballytown.

Had Patrick not taken to drink again he no doubt would have kept clear of active politics, but just a fortnight after he had broken out, a sudden crisis occurred in the affairs of Ireland. Affairs built up from a false basis are constantly being precipitated into a crisis. The temptation was a strong

one; Patrick looked at it from both sides of his head, the sensible and the vain side; he then let himself go and "politics" swallowed him up.

Why Michael Connors took the side he did we cannot stop to examine in detail. Michael was a business man who owed money to many people, and his custom depended upon his being civil and pleasing the largest number possible. Michael may have been a patriot, we express no opinion here upon the matter, but anyway he went with the largest crowd. Patrick O'Kelly was too independent to be influenced by even business considerations once his heart was in a thing, and he would have probably chosen sides on common-sense grounds if he had any common-sense to guide him in these matters. But Patrick was in a fog in face of the questions which the crisis asked, so he threw in his lot with one mob because Michael Connors had taken sides with the other.

Connors, who had read "Mitchell's History of Ireland," knew a great many more facts about his country than Patrick, and indeed so hard was Patrick pressed, and so deeply was he stirred by this advantage over him which Connors possessed, that he startled Tom one day by asking him for a few of his Irish history books. He was quite humble before Tom.

"That Connors has the pull o' me now, but I'll give him history enough the next time."

The next time, however, that Patrick spoke at a local meeting he forgot all the history that he had learned out of Tom's books, but unfortunately he had, as he invariably had on these occasions, a lively recollection of the past record, public and private, of Michael Connors.

"I knew him," said he in the course of his speech; "I knew him when he hadn't a decent shoe to his foot, and when he lived up in Smith's Lane, mending ould kettles for a livin'. The counthry is in a purty pass when the likes of him wants to lade the people."

The following night Michael Connors, whilst speaking at the weekly meeting of the Tweedleite League, gave the history of Patrick O'Kelly, how often he had to be helped home in the night, and incidents of that sort, and how at the wedding of his eldest daughter he made "a holy show" of himself, and that three waiters had to carry him out and throw cold water on his face he was so drunk.

An important question of political principle ostensibly divided Connors from Patrick O'Kelly, and the same question was originally responsible for dividing Ballytown into two—later on to be increased to three, and afterwards to four camps. But Patrick was not a month in active politics when all about the perfidy of the Government was forgotten —what he was principally against now was Connors.

The town got very excited, boys fought in school and houses were divided amongst themselves, and two partisans appeared in the police court one day charged with almost battering the life out of one another.

"'Twas all about politics, yer honour," said one of them. "Ye see, sir, 'twas this way. I says that Mick Connors used to be mendin' kettles in his early days, and the other man then says that it was a damn lie, and that how Misther Patrick O'Kelly was drunk at his daughter's weddin'. 'It's a nefarious calumnious pervarsion o' the thruth,' says I—as I know it is, yer honour. Well, off wud his coat then, an' he says I was no man an' that I was a thraitor to me counthry. 'Here,' says I, 'let's act like sensible men an' argue our politics raisonably. I on'y said,' says I, 'that Micky Connors was a tinker an' that's no more than the truth.'

"'Well, supposin' he was itself,' said the other man, 'that's betther than a dhrunkard like Patsy O'Kelly.'

"'You're a low, mane bla'guard to say that,' says I; an' I couldn't keep me hand off him any longer, yer honour. He wouldn't argue politics raisonably. You see, sir, he's a Tweedleite an' I'm a sthrong Twaddleite."

Mrs. O'Kelly wished that politics—whatever exactly they were—had never been invented. It was

she who was carrying on most of the corn and milling business now and, simple woman that she was, the profits were not going up under her management. Patrick was drinking as he had never drank in his life before. He started a Patriotic and Literary Club for his side in opposition to the old National Club which the Tweedleites had collared, and, as chairman and chief financial backer, his chief duty appeared to be, to be in and out throughout the day "thratin'" his friends. At eight o'clock he usually retired to the smoking-room for the evening, and was often helped home at twelve o'clock, an unconceivable hour for Ballytown, where the public-houses shut at ten.

Young Mr. Robert Casey was the honorary secretary, and he pestered the life out of the chairman with his view that, as the club was "litherary" as well as patriotic, it would be necessary to have debates and lectures.

A debate was accordingly arranged, the subject being "Grattan's Parliament." Seventeen of the members, mostly budding and inexperienced youths, turned up, and Patrick O'Kelly was, of course, in the chair. The opener of the debate, in a dull, monotonous voice, related some of the facts concerning this particular Parliament, which he had compiled the night before from an abridged life of Grattan. He was followed by a young man, studying for a

degree, who quoted bits of Latin and had much to say on old Roman institutions. Before he had done, however, five of the audience slipped out in the direction of the bar.

"It's too clever entirely for me," said one of them.

"Yerrah, they don't know what they're talkin' about," said another.

"I'd sooner have a game of forty-five than all the damn debates that were ever in id," said a third.

"Well, it made me bloomin' dhry," said No. 1; "Let's have a dhrink."

In the meantime, Mr. Corcoran had got upon his feet, and, as the second speaker had shifted the interest from Grattan to Old Rome, Corcoran ignored both, and was getting hot on the subject of a vote on a resolution in sympathy with the Madhi, which was proposed at the Board of Guardians the week before.

Michael Connors discovered that he had pressing business to attend to elsewhere just before the vote came on, and, as Mr. Corcoran eloquently put it, "the back-slidin' thraithor hadn't the courage to stand to his guns before the heredithary enemies of his counthry, but slunk away in the hour of thrial like the mane-livered sleeveen that he is."

This was the first sentence that woke up enthusiasm, and the well-soaked gentlemen from the bar filed in—at least as many of them as were able, for several were safer in a sitting posture.

Grattan and his Parliament were now lost sight of altogether, and Michael Connors became the figure around which the speechifying raged. Mr. Bob Corcoran, finding that he had the ear of the audience, gave them plenty of that thing of which he was complete master, and which is usually classed under the title of "Irish eloquence." He pointed out to them at much length that his country was one which he would be proud to die for—in fact, one that they would all be proud to die for. Such sentiments sent the applause thundering, and worked the audience into such a high state of patriotism that a man in the corner was inspired to remark:—"To hell wud Connors."

The applause when Corcoran resumed his seat was almost deafening, and there was not one man present—and the meeting by this time numbered upwards of 150—who remembered that Corcoran was never known "to stand a thrate," if by hook or by crook he could get out of it.

It is a great mistake to suppose that "Irish eloquence" is ineffectual. When at last the debate was concluded, Mr. Patrick O'Kelly rose to sum up.

"There are men," said he, in the course of his speech—"There are men about who take a gloomy view of our great an' historic country, but the sentiments that have been utthered to-night I make bould to say show that the spirit of Owen Roe, of Sarsfield, an' of Davis are green in our hearts to-day as

when our forefathers defended Limerick and charged the Saxons on Vinegar and Oulart Hills. But we must not forget that we have thraitors thrailin' like serpents over the fair fields of our holy land. Down wud them, I say, for until we have smashed them and all their breed the blessed sun o' freedom will never rise upon our disthracted land."

The lot of the women of Ireland is largely to work and weep. Whilst Patrick O'Kelly was playing the hero his wife kept a weary vigil behind the screen of the parlour window. Several times she rose to her feet with a feeling of relief, but the staggering footsteps in each case proved to be those of some one else's husband. Mrs. O'Kelly prayed and wept and waited in silence until half-past ten. This was about the hour when she usually grew afraid, and having wiped her eyes and waited until she believed that all tell-tale signs had gone she left the parlour and entered the room where Tom, Peter and Kitty were sitting moodily round the fire.

Ten minutes afterwards the two boys were sent on an errand in which they were now well experienced. Tom was peeping in through the doors of several public-houses in one end of the town, and Peter was similarly occupied at the other end. Mrs. O'Kelly and Kitty knew nothing about the debate that was going on, nor indeed did they ever want to hear the

name of the Ballytown Literary and Patriotic Club mentioned. When occasionally it was mentioned Mrs. O'Kelly heaved a sigh, and when the name of the particular leader of the Irish race who had caught her husband's allegiance was pronounced, an expression of sad resignation would come over her face, and she would sometimes say:—"May God forgive him."

Tom's tap at the window was at last heard, and Mrs. O'Kelly cautiously opened the door. She knew when she saw that little Tom's head was drooping that he had failed in his search.

"He isn't in any o' them, ma'am," was all that Tom said, and he said that much with difficulty.

"Well, that's a good boy," said Mrs. O'Kelly, patting him on the head. "You'll always be a good boy and let you run up to bed now, and don't forget to say yer prayers an' say one for your father."

Tom looked up for a moment in his mother's face. No affliction or trouble could rob it of its serenity. It was its very sweetness that stung him most. He went upstairs with something, he knew not what, bursting inside him for expression. "God's curse on whoever makes him dhrink," he hissed between his teeth. And then getting frightened at the terrible words he had uttered, he threw himself on the bed and burst into tears.

It was not long until Peter's tap at the window

was heard. His story was similar to Tom's and he, also, was sent off to bed.

Mrs. O'Kelly and Kitty remained waiting, and it was not until a quarter past twelve that footsteps were heard and then the grating of a latch-key against the door. In a few moments Patrick O'Kelly, supported by Mr. Maurice Keegan, a pawn-broker and Twaddleite candidate for Ballytown, stood in the hall.

The moment that Mrs. O'Kelly heard his voice, and knew that he was safe, she sat down on the sofa in a state of comparative happiness, and Kitty, who always stuck by her mother on these occasions, went out to receive her parent. Stress of circumstances had changed Kitty considerably of recent years, and she carried herself now like a woman.

"This is a nice time for ye to be coming home," said she to her father; and, then turning to the other man, demanded sharply: —

"Who are you?"

Mr. Keegan's heavy under-lip fell at this unexpected challenge.

"Sure, missey, ye know me well enough. Don't be lookin' so angry; he on'y took a dhrop too much —an 'sure that's many a good man's fault. 'Twas a great debate that was down at the club, an' indeed, to be honest wud ye, we nearly all of us took more than was good for us."

This speech, which reads more evenly than it was spoken, was intended to appease Kitty. However, it had the opposite effect.

"Lave him down there"—she always dropped her English accent when she was in earnest—"Lave him down there and be off wud yerself as qûick as yer legs can carry ye, ye miserable ould dhrunkard, wud a sick wife an' three childre at home. Gi long wud ye, it's smacked wud a blackthorn you and the likes o' ye ougnt to be; an' on'y for I wouldn't soil me hands on ye I'd pull the whiskers out o' yer face. Get off wud ye; if they put you into Parliament the town 'll be well rid o' ye."

And Mr. Maurice Keegan, orator, politician, patriot, Parliamentary candidate and a leader of Ballytown public opinion, had his elbow made black and blue by the hall-door which Kitty banged after him before he was completely out of the house.

On his way he met Martin Courtney, who had helped Corcoran home. Martin was laughing immoderately, for though he had drunk as much and perhaps more than any of the others, he was so well seasoned to it, that it showed little or no signs upon him. The lights were out in Corcoran's house when Martin brought the owner to the hall-door. Martin was afraid to leave his friend until he saw him in safe hands, so he knocked at the door and waited. He had to knock three times, and after the third

knock he saw the reflection of a light over the door and heard a step upon the stairs. The door was then opened and Mrs. Corcoran, with a lighted candle in her hand, appeared in the hall.

"I'm very sorry, ma'am," began Martin, in whose arms Corcoran was now lying almost a dead weight, "I'm very sorry, ma'am, but I thought it as well as Misther Corcoran just tuk a little dhrop too much if I'd come as far——"

Mrs. Corcoran, whose expression was quite passive, did not allow Martin to proceed with his maudlin apology. She lifted the candle up so as to have a good look at her husband. "Oh, that's all right," said she, "just leave him on the sofa." She then turned on her heel and went upstairs.

Keegan and Courtney, when they came to the end of Patrick Street, had a long conversation before parting from one another for their respective homes.

"All I'm hopin' for now," said Keegan, "is that the Madhi will lick hell out o' the English. England's difficulty will be our opportunity. She will get frightened of us an' give us what we want, an' our downthrodden race will become in the future, as it has always been in the past, the first flower o' the earth an' first gem o' the say. No matther, boy; cheer up, our day is comin'."

"It is, be chripes," said Courtney. "I may be on a battlefield yet, wud the green flag floatin' to

victhory over me head, and the epitaph of Robert Emmett will be written. It's enough to make a man's blood boil to see the way we're thrated. You're a good man, Misther Keegan—wan that respects himself, an' he isn't any man at all who doesn't do that. You know what I'm goin' to say is thrue—now listen to me. The whole business of Ballytown will be in the hands of the English before long. They're comin' in with their new ways o' doing things, takin' the bread out o' honest men's mouths. I remember the time when I med as much as a shillin' profit on a pound o' tay, but these mane English have cut down the prices an' honest men like me an' you, who spend our money in the counthry an' do our best to elevate it morally, intellectually, politically, and socially, haven't quarther the money to spend. The counthry is goin' to the dogs, Misther Keegan, but all the same I'd sooner see it go to the rats than to see a nefarious scoundhrel like Mick Connors an' his crew have the upper hand. They must be squelched—squelched an' nothin' short of it, if this counthry is ever to enjoy the glorious privilege of a Parliament in the old house in College Green."

"It's thrue for you every word ye say," said Keegan.

"Well, look here," said Courtney, "ye may as well be walkin' my way—I have a little sup at home—an' we can have a last dhrop before parting."

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH IS EXPLAINED, AMONGST OTHER MATTERS, WHY A CERTAIN COMMITTEE MEETING DID NOT TAKE PLACE.

Patrick O'Kelly had not been in "politics" five weeks when he had a bad fit of delirium tremens, more popularly known in Ballytown as "the horrors." At the period at which this chapter opens he is making a heroic effort to keep himself steady. He came home regularly to his tea every night, and when matters of urgent political importance brought him to the Ballytown Patriotic and Literary Club his drink was "a half o' claret."

The hopes of the O'Kellys were rising again. Patrick even found time to look over the books of his business, and he was seen on several evenings at dusk going into the chapel by the side-door, and on more than one occasion he remained fully half an hour inside.

When Mrs. O'Kelly heard this an expression of quite unearthly joy spread over her face, and she fell upon her knees and burst into tears. She was in failing health—the vigour of youth had long

since left her—and it was only on fine week mornings that she went to Mass of late, but since she heard of the change that had come over her husband, hail, snow, thunder would not keep her at home for even one morning, and her evening "half-hour" at the chapel was increased to three-quarters, often to a whole hour's visit.

Tom and Peter and Kitty had long and anxious speculations about the future, and Mr. and Mrs. Moloney, with the nurse rolling the perambulator before them, came regularly every day to talk over the family affairs.

Andrew, the fashionable doctor, did not take much interest in the affairs of the family at this time. He had his own cares to worry him, and, as he had elbowed his way into the county set in the sad charatcer of a funny man, his way was not all roses. Underneath a thick coating of snobbery, Andrew had much of the traditional spirit of the O'Kellys, and he oscillated between the two extremes of sneaker after a few descendants of Cromwellian settlers and a spirited man of the people. At one time we find him cutting Mr. Percy Montague-Perkins across the face with his riding whip because the latter referred to him as a "low-born Papist"; and at another we see him bowing low, the most humble and obedient servant of Sir Tony Trench, the finished gentleman and blackguard. He was in very bad odour with the county people at this period. At the

dinner, which was given by them to Lord Killogan, on the latter coming to live upon his estate, the Honorable Albert Clarence Donothing made some sneering remarks about peasants' sons who clad themselves in the feathers of the aristocracy and carried the manners of the bogland into the society of the county. Andrew, who was a real humorist and a master of after-dinner speaking, was always in demand when any light orating was to be done. Unfortunately for his material interests he was on the list of speakers on this occasion, and the O'Kelly in him got the upper hand of the shoneen. When the company had laughed several times at his humorous sallies they were suddenly treated to this:

"As one of the previous speakers said—or rather hinted, for a sting comes more naturally from some natures than a blow—I was born of a peasant stock. But, gentlemen, it is not in humility but in pride I say it, for as I say it I think of the historic race from which the peasants of yesterday have sprung and I see a picture of unscrupulous adventurers out of the villages and towns of England ravaging and pillaging through this country, and destined by a curious fate to breed a posterity that will assume a position which no virtue, no merit, no tradition entitles them to. They are hated—and justly hated—by the unfortunates who have to bear with them; they are despised by every man of honesty and sense."

Andrew rose to dignity on this occasion, as he often did on many others, but it was short lived. The permanent forces working against the display of such spirit were not to be put aside by one ordinary man, or by any sudden and individual burst of generous passion. The doors of the county are shut upon him now, but he will yet knock humbly at them and be allowed re-entrance; he will cringe to the Cromwellians and curse the fate that decreed he should be born the son of a vulgar Irish mill owner.

One Sunday about this period he dined with the family. There was a good deal of excitement in Ballytown, for one of the leaders of the Irish race was to address a meeting there a fortnight hence. Andrew, still smarting under exclusion from the county set, was very sarcastic at the expense of "these low Cromwellians." But this attitude was false. He secretly thought more of them since they showed him how comfortably they could get along without him. Andrew had no position to take up when he affected to despise them. What was he to stand upon? They were in the main vulgar and brainless, but could he go into opposition by standing on the dignity of the old race with Patrick O'Kelly staggering at one side of him and Mrs. Mary Moloney with her "paar donney maws" and "maa chairs" on the other? Could he denounce the County Club from amid the fumes and ranting and

bad language of the Literary and Patriotic? Andrew had drifted into the fixed conviction that his race had once great points of character, but that it was now far gone in a universal drift to the dogs.

"I hope you won't speak at this demonstration next Sunday week, sir," said Andrew to his father after dinner.

"Well," said Patrick, "to be honest wud ye, I'd as lief be out o' the whole damn business, but as I tuk up politics I can't well go back now, for 'twould be cowardly."

It was in vain that Andrew tried to turn his father's determination, so he changed the conversation.

"That was sad about old Keegan, for he had his decent points, even if he was a bit of a hard-goer. I hear he died of fever."

"So I believe, God bless the hearers," replied Patrick.

At this point Kitty fixed her eyes upon her father.

"That's all a pack o' lies," said she, bitterly. "Everyone knows well that he died o' dhrink."

Patrick winced under this piece of plain speaking.

"Look here, now, you're runnin' wud yerself, missey. Don't have so much prate, if ye plaize."

"It's thrue," said Kitty, defiantly.

The situation was saved from reaching a crisis by Dr. Andrew remarking: —

"I don't know but I might say a few words myself at this demonstration. I'm coming to the conclusion that a professional man must go with the people. The only point I'm doubtful upon is—Will High Faluter carry the country, for I'm too old now to take up with lost causes. I want to be on the winning side."

"If you spake," said Patrick, "what about the 'quality.' They may change over to Dr. Sullivan to spite ye."

"Oh, they be hanged," replied Andrew. "They have no influence now, and very little money either. I think the game to play is to go with High Faluter, but I must consider it. I don't suppose that chap cares a straw for the people. He has plenty of money and wants to make a name for himself."

Kitty here chimed in with the remark:—"Don't judge everywan be yerself."

And Patrick said:—"Well, I look upon a dale o' them as a parcel o' cheats, an' if Connors wud dhrop out on the other side I'd likely wash me hands o' the whole box and dice o' them. It's time now anyway that I was takin' a turn down to see Corcoran about the arrangements. I wish they'd have their demonstration somewhere else, for 'twill cost me a power o' money before I'm done wud it, an', as for Home Rule, me opinion is that eventually we'll never get it."

Patrick O'Kelly remained a long time in consultation with Corcoran, and shortly after eight o'clock in the evening the two of them proceeded to the Literary and Patriotic Club, where it had been arranged a committee meeting was to be held. They waited there for a quarter of an hour, but no one turned up, and on Johnny, the porter, being asked as to the whereabouts of the members he replied: —

"Wisha, sure they're all over at the Assembly rooms to see a great play."

"Damn it, man, I forgot all about that," said Corcoran. "Come along over wud me. We can have a committee any day, but 'tisn't always we can see a play from London."

Patrick O'Kelly closed his mouth hardly and shook his head.

"I'd rather not," said he, "I'll stop here and do ye come back when the show is over, and we'll hould the committee meetin'."

The fact was Patrick O'Kelly, though a rough man given latterly to heavy drinking, retained much of the old Irish feeling about the dignity of womanhood, and the pictures on the walls which had adorned Ballytown during the past week were altogether out of harmony with his feelings on the subject. For, with all his faults, Patrick was not a vulgar man in the main, not nearly so vulgar at the worst as the Hon. Tony Trench, to be introduced

to whom many of the young ladies of Ballytown would give five years of their lives. It was different with the younger generation. They—or most of the well-dressed portion of them—had all the vulgarity with none of the polish of the Hon. Tony. With them it did not matter much what the play might be; the pictures drew them.

"All right," said Corcoran, impatient to be off, "I'll bring the boys back when 'tis over."

The play—which was a musical comedy—was in full kick when Corcoran entered; and the stalls—which were two shillings in Ballytown—were crowded. The members of the Patriotic and Literary and the National Clubs were there in strong force. A crowd from the former hung round the door, and, though few of them had ever been twenty miles out of Ballytown in their lives, many affected a *blasé* expression as if they were bored by a whole season of play-going.

As this is not a "realistic" novel we will not chronicle their conversation during the performance. The play itself was far below mediocrity, and was made up principally of cheap cynicism, more or less indecent suggestion, tights, high-kick dancing, and songs brimming over with coarseness or stinking with highly-spiced sentimentality. But whatever its merits or its faults, it met with a great reception from the discriminating audience of Ballytown. The

players were called before the curtain three times, and Clarendon Trevellyan, a third-rate London "comic," whose real name was George Smith, condescended to deliver a little speech, in which amid deafening applause from all parts of the house, he remarked that, though the reception they had got was most gratifying, it was only what warm-hearted sons of the Emerald Isle always extended to dramatic art. Irishmen were renowned all the world over for their critical taste, and when an actor passed an audience of the people of Ballytown, he might face any capital city in the world with confidence in the reception which awaited him.

And thus it was that G. Smith having buttered Ballytown on the right side, Ballytown had his actors out three times after the fall of the curtain on the succeeding nights; and the "Ballytown Echo" had a leader on Irish dramatic taste, in which the name of Clarendon Trevellyan largely figured.

But it was not only the members of the Literary and Patriotic and National Clubs who flocked to the play. The "intellectual minority" were also to the fore, and Miss Matilda Flanagan, who read a paper at the Literary, Scientific and Archœological Society on "Greek Art," shook her head sadly as she was talking to Miss Maud Bren-nan (the accent on the last syllable), and remarked: —

"It is pitiful to think that most of the real wit

and point that sparkles through this comedy will be absolutely lost on the people. It will, I fear, be a long time until the townspeople will be educated up to the proper standard to appreciate such a piece as this."

And Miss Brennan, who felt uncomfortable several times at what she feared was coarseness if not worse, turned round re-assured by the authority of such a distinguished woman of letters as Miss Flanagan, and remarked:

"Yes, indeed."

Mr. Williams and his three maiden daughters were also present in the dress circle. Mr. Williams was a man of independent means. His three daughters were shining lights amongst the intellectual minority, and it was well known that they were "waiting for officers." They generally wore an air of great disdain, though Julia, their servant maid, along with spreading the report that they half starved themselves in order to keep up a fine appearance, and that the younger drank vinegar to make herself look genteel, said that "it was the divil entirely" to hear them calling one another names when they fell out at home, and further that she, Julia, was often sent by Miss Williams for three crubeens, with instructions to say that they were for herself and her sister who had just come from the country to visit her.

Mr. Reginald Dolan, the solicitor, and his wife, were in a box. Mrs. Dolan was a Miss Wilkins, from Northampton, and the Williams' and others of the intellectual minority made her their leader and model in all things. It was generally understood that Mr. and Mrs. Dolan were not particularly happy at home, for the lady, though she had a pretty face and though her conversation in company was generally limited to mincing expressions of endearment, was reputed to fully make up for her taciturnity and extraordinary sweetness in public, in the privacy of her own household. Mr. Dolan, though a snob of the deepest dye, could not altogether smother his Irish nature, and really carried himself like a man and a gentleman down in the stables amongst his two sturdy boys from Killogan, who looked after the animals.

"Arrah, the world is all right for you, Misther Reginald, wud plenty o' money an' fair withal," said Larry Lonergan to him one day.

Mr. Reginald looked straight at Larry, and there was a softness in his eye.

"I don't know," said Mr. Reginald, "but on your twelve shillings a week you're a happier man than I am."

And Mr. Reginald finished off the sentence with a deep sigh and walked towards his house.

"Wasn't that a sthrange sayin' now," said Larry

to his comrade, Tommy, after he had duly related the story to the latter.

"Sthrange," said Tommy, "an' be me sowl, it isn't. I'd sooner live on spuds an' milk all the days o' me life than dhrive in carriages and be tied to a whip of a woman like the masther is—she lades him the divil of a time of it. Yerrah, Larry, boy, believe me, money isn't everything in this world, an' Misther Reginald if he had the chance would often swop places wud you or me."

The young ladies of the McNab family, the proprietors of the largest drapery establishment in Ballytown, were also present at the play. They were Protestants, of Scotch descent, and they lived just a mile from the town, on the strength of which latter fact they looked upon themselves as County people. What with being rich and being Protestants, the sleeveens of Ballytown looked up to them as people of a superior mould. They made their money on the shillings and pounds of their Catholic neighbours, but lost no opportunity of parading their assumed contempt for the "ignorant Papists." On the strength of their Scotch descent—their grandfather came over from Fifeshire as under gardener to Sir Toby Tighe—they had highly inflated Imperial views on politics, the sons cursed the Nationalists and the daughters held themselves aloof from all society, except a very select circle, or any

man from England who might come over in any capacity from that of a tourist to a traveller in tea. One of the boys of the family had not the best of reputations, and was generally looked down upon by honest folk as a finished cad, but Mr. Robert Casey, the hon. secretary of the Literary and Patriotic Club, who was a Nationalist of extreme views, struck up an acquaintance with Harry McNab, and stole ten pounds by instalments out of his father's till in order to make a great fellow of himself by treating Harry and Harry's friends, and generally acting the slashing gentleman.

At the end of a fortnight, however, Robert found that he was being made a butt and a joke of, and when he went back to the Literary and Patriotic Club he had to put up with sneers from all sides; and when his father tried to balance his cash and made consequent discoveries, Robert's one-and-sixpence a week pocket money was stopped indefinitely, and he had to remain behind the counter in future until the shop closed at nine o'clock.

We cannot stop longer to introduce the reader to any others present at the play on this occasion. The members of the committee of the Literary and Patriotic Club had duly visited the bar between each act, and, by the time the drop scene fell, they were in a lively and rowdy mood. They marched across in the direction of the club, shouting rebellious songs

breathing hatred for England, and swearing in every other verse eternal devotion to the land of their birth.

"Hello, there's Clarendon Trevellyan. Hurroo!" exclaimed Corcoran suddenly, as a slight, wrapped-up figure passed by evidently making for the Queen's Hotel. The band of patriots took up the shout, and G. Smith entered his hotel amid a scene of great enthusiasm. The patriots then turned to the right-about, and to the air of "O'Donnell Aboo" they struck out once more for the club.

"These Hoirish are the biggest guys I've ever come across," said G. Smith to himself, as he threw a whiskey and soda down his throat.

"Indeed, an' it's time ye came," said Patrick O'Kelly, who had almost fallen asleep over the latest reported speech of Mr. High Faluter, M.P. "I believe 'twas dozin' I was."

None of the committee took much notice of him, however, for Corcoran had raised the cry of "Dhrinks! where's Johnny?"

Mr. Dick O'Reilly, who was secretary to the Demonstration Committee, and had spent much time some days ago drafting a resolution, to be proposed at the forthcoming demonstration, against the brutal tyranny which a nefarious Government was inflicting on the Isle of Saints and Scholars, renowned in dim ages for its piety and wisdom, and which

ground us under its iron heel, and more of that sort, was lolling in a chair, with his hat very much sideways on his head and over his right eye, just as he had seen one of the actors lolling a few hours previously. He was chanting a lyric which he had learned at the play: —

"She's a daisy,
Oh, she's a loidy,
She's the belle of all the town,
Don't cher know. Ta, ra, ra."

Peter Curran made a swipe of his stick at the hat of the singer and knocked it to the other end of the room.

"Blast yer sowl, what the hell did you do that for?" asked O'Reilly, in a rage.

"Shut your bloomin' jaw," replied Curran.

"Only for you're dhrunk," said O'Reilly meekly, as he staggered after his hat, "I'd blacken your boss eye for ye."

"Are ye goin' to have this committee meetin' tonight, or are ye not?" asked Patrick O'Kelly, in a loud voice, above the din. "For if ye're not I'm goin' home at wance."

"Hould on a minit," said Corcoran, "what a divil of a hurry ye're in."

"Look here, boys," said Peter Curran, "let's make a night of it; the damn committee will do another time. Have another dhrink, let ye."

Patrick O'Kelly surveyed the crowd with a hard expression on his face. A few dim, half-connected thoughts ran through his head. He took up his hat: —

"Good-night to ye," he said, and left the club.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH IS SET OUT THE HISTORY OF A REMARKABLE SOCIETY, AND LIGHT IS THROWN ON JUVENILE IRELAND.

We must now recall our readers' attention to Patrick O'Kelly's young sons, Peter and Tom and to the literary society. We left Tom stretched on the sofa, having a big think over the prospects of Peter's new enterprise, and since that evening he could scarcely bring his mind to bear upon anything else.

But Jenny Casey and Cissy Ryan got into the habit just at this period of walking out to Killogan, half a mile from Ballytown, every evening after school. As a consequence of this, Peter could not be got to concentrate his attention on anything so prosy as a literary society. He and Jamesy Doyle took a great fancy for walking out to Killogan also. They used to lie in wait on top of a grassy wall—in Anglo-Irish "a ditch"—smoking cigarettes, sometimes made of tea, until Jenny and Cissy came in sight. There was invariably a sudden retreat to the other side of the wall then, except once when Peter dropped down first, and, catching hold of Jamesy, threatened to hold him on the wall whilst the girls

passed. There was a terrible struggle on that day, and cries of "I'll break yer mouth" and "I'll murther ye if ye don't lave me go," and such like, might be heard one hundred yards away, and Jamesy got back to Ballytown earlier than usual on this occasion, with his handkerchief tied round his left thumb, and Peter followed with his hair carefully dragged down over his right temple.

Jamesy and Peter did not talk to one another for forty-eight hours after that; but on the second day Peter determined he wouldn't be a fool, and set out for the grassy wall by himself only to find that Jamesy was there before him. After some mutual abuse and high words they made it up there and then.

Of course, neither Jamesy nor Peter ever spoke to either of the girls. They were accustomed to come out on the road when they had carefully buttoned their coats, and generally settled themselves, and march after them with a manly stride.

"Look here now, Jamesy," said Peter one day, "I'll smile at her this time. You watch; I've made up me mind in airnest. I said I'd do it yesterday, but I got a bit frightened in the end. But watch me this time."

Whether Peter kept his resolution or not poor Jamesy could not tell, for he, notwithstanding a gallant effort to remain cool, became painfully self-

conscious when they were about to pass the girls, and all his energies were directed to prevent his knees from knocking together, as from the peculiar formation of his legs they were liable to do. The boys would sometimes stop when they had got in front and light cigarettes. And on one occasion Peter growing unusually bold raised his hat and said: —

"'Tis a very cold day to-day."

Whereupon Miss Jenny Casey lifted her eyebrows, and putting her nose in the air, replied: —

"Your're very impertinent, Peter O'Kelly."

Then both girls giggled, and Jamesy said: —

"That's wan for you, Pether."

"Wisha, bad 'cess to them for girls, anyway," said Tom to himself; "the literary society will never be started wud them."

For Tom had fitted up a fire place in the outhouse, and a hook in the ceiling from which to swing the hanging lamp; and he had gathered scores of "Weekly Freeman" cartoons to plaster and decorate the walls. He did more than that: he bought a penny pass-book in which to write poems. But making a fire-place came easier to Tom than writing poetry. He started on the first page of the pass-book with: —"The stars shone down on Ballytown."

But he couldn't—though he racked his brains for

a whole evening—add the second line to it. He turned over the page the next day, and wrote:—

"Hark! I hear the pike-men tramping."

but with a like unsatisfactory result. He wrote in all seven first lines and then tore up the pass-book in a temper, and lay afterwards on the sofa in a profound fit of depression. What a mockery a literary society would be to him when he couldn't write poetry!

The following day Peter was all enthusiasm for the projected society. It so happened that Miss Maher, the pious old lady who sold whiskey without a license, sitting behind her counter, had noticed Jamesy and Peter pass by her window at about the same hour every evening for a week, shortly afterwards to be followed by Cissy and Jenny; and her virtuous mind, ever on the search for evil designs in others, grew alarmed. Her maid of all work was accordingly sent on the road to Killogan one evening with instructions to observe and report on all she saw. She came back very pale and excited, and related that one of the girls looked back at the boys when about a quarter of a mile from Ballytown, and that one of the boys made a movement with his hand, of the nature of which she was not quite sure—for she wouldn't like to say anything uncharitable of anyone—but she thought it was—and here she stammered and blushed—she thought it was what was called "Kissing hands."

"Oh," exclaimed Miss Maher, lifting up her hands and eyes in pious horror, "what is the world coming to"!

The next morning Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Ryan received each an anonymous letter setting forth a full account of the perilous precipice upon which their daughters were heedlessly walking. Jamesy and Peter, knowing nothing of the tender care and solicitude that Miss Maher was expending about their moral welfare, went as usual to the grassy wall and, of course, went in vain. On the second day Peter, who began to feel that he was cruelly slighted, discovered that Jenny had a slight turn up in her nose, and of course he never thought particularly about Cissy. Jamesy likewise found flaws in both, and each agreed that "goin' afther girls" was "Tommy rot" after all, and unworthy of the attention of boys who had a literary society to start, and a country to free.

Peter and Jamesy now set themselves to work in right earnest, and made up for lost time; and Tom was kept very busy pasting pictures and carrying down books and chairs and making a long table out of an old door laid on a big box at one end, and on a clothes-horse at the other. Bob McCarthy and Maurice Casey were occasionally brought in to help, and in a very short time the old out-house was looking quite comfortable.

The first hitch occurred when Jamesy, who had been appointed treasurer, asked Bob McCarthy for the starting sixpence. There was a very long argument over this, and Peter recited a list of all the things that he supplied free to the society, the books, the fire-place, the table, the out-house, and so forth; and Tom, who was standing in the back ground, grew pale with anger at the meanness of Bob McCarthy, and, going over to him, looked up in his face and said: —

"Gi long, ye mane scut."

At last, however, Bob agreed to pay fourpence, and to give an old account book, for writing the minutes in, in lieu of the balance.

Peter's ambition knew no bounds when the opening night had been fixed; and during the two days before that event he could talk of nothing else but his great schemes. We have already seen that he had a plan in his head for the complete settlement of the Land Question, but such matters appeared mean in the light of his new ambitions. In fact, he had come to look with disdain upon mere agitation, unconstitutional or otherwise, and talked with Jamesy over plans for an insurrection. Jamesy appeared to be very keen on the insurrection until Peter suggested that they should organise a band of twelve boys to steal into the police barracks one night and make off with the rifles. This plan

smacked too much of cold reality for Jamesy, and he said: —

"But suppose the peelers were to wake an' stab us."

"There," said Peter, who didn't like being brought down from the clouds. "There—I always knew you were a hang coward."

"I'm not a coward," retorted Jamesy; "an' as for that I'd like to know who ran away yestherday when he seen a dhrunken man in the sthreet."

"Oh, yes," said Peter. "But there's no use in getting bashed about be a dhrunken man for nothing. I wouldn't run away from a peeler in an insurrection."

This explanation appeared to appease Jamesy.

"But where," said he, "where will we hide the rifles when we take 'em."

"Well," replied Peter, "I never knew such a fellow for raisin' difficulties as you are."

Peter was also going to start a real Irish literature, for somehow or other "The Spirit of the Nation" and "The Felon's Track" did not quite satisfy him.

"An' perhaps," said he, "in years to come we might be great men, an' write real books, and the literary society will be historic."

There was no doubt about it, Peter was of the sanguine temperament. Tom was not allowed to have any say in these various plans of Peter; and if he

did put in a word now and again he was usually met with: —

"Shut yer mouth; what do you know. You're only a kid."

When the evening of the opening night came round Tom was very busy settling the sticks, paper and coals, so that nothing would require to be done but strike a match and light the fire. Then he had to fill the hanging lamp with oil and arrange the chairs and leave a pen and ink for the president—who, of course, was Peter. Poor Tom felt very humble, and was willing to do any menial work for the society since he failed in his efforts to compose poetry.

The first question to be decided at the opening meeting was the name by which the society was to be known in history. Bob McCarthy suggested "The Ballytown Juvenile Literary Association"; at this suggestion Tom, Jamesy and Maurice Casey laughed, and Peter merely looked up from the presidential desk and gave Bob McCarthy a look of scorn. Jamesy's suggestion was the "Irish Republican Literary and Debating Club"; Tom offered two: "The Rapparee Boys"—which, indeed, was Patsy's idea—and "The Death or Liberty Literary Society."

None of these suggestions was, however, acceptable to the majority, Peter being foremost in each

case in describing each of them as "rot." Peter then rose and made a short speech in which he incidentally reminded the members that he started the idea, and thought out the plans, and that his brother, Tom, had made the fire-place and the table, and winding up he said: —

"The only name that would be fitting for this momentuous assembly—an assembly, gentlemen, that may yet become historic and may produce great Irish writers and orators who will shed lustre on the human race—is 'The O'Kelly Literary League.'"

Bob McCarthy was inclined to demur at this, and even so was Jamesy; but eventually it was agreed to unanimously. As a matter of fact, we can confidently assure the reader—though none of the members was aware of it—that had Peter's suggestion not been accepted the club would have died before it was christened; for Peter's temperament was such that, had he not been allowed his own way in a matter of this kind, no other should be allowed his.

Jamesy then, as had been arranged, opened a debate on "Should Boycotting be Allowed?" Jamesy's remarks were very disconnected, and all wide of the mark; and Tom, who was sitting opposite him, feeling that he would be the better of it if he could give his mouth a good big stretch all over his face, rose from his seat and went over to see to the fire.

Bob McCarthy took the other side, and, in the course of his remarks, asked: —

"Suppose pa's customers were to turn round and say they wouldn't deal wud him—would that be right? He wouldn't have any profits then, and I would have to go in me bare feet."

It was soon evident that the debate was a bit slow for the temper of the society; and Peter cut it short abruptly, and proceeded to read an original account, written in his own writing, of the escape of James Stephens from Richmond Jail. Tom became enraptured at this, for though he had read about the escape twenty times he could listen to it as often again. Jamesy grew pale with excitement at parts of it, and Bob McCarthy and Maurice Casey were likewise visibly affected. The night was somewhat wild, and the wind whistled in through the door of the old out-house and shook the hanging lamp. The shadows swayed on the walls, and the big sycamore tree outside flapped its leaves. Peter was now worked up to such a pitch that he was acting as well as reading. The excitement was, indeed, becoming painful, when all at once steps were heard stealing outside, and Bob McCarthy nearly collapsed from nervousness. However, the steps proved to be those of Larry, the O'Kelly's yard-man, who had come down to know if Tom was done with the duster which Larry lent him in order to wipe the lamp.

When Larry had departed with his duster, Peter suggested that they should form themselves into a revolutionary society, and that, when they were strong enough, they should amalgamate with the Fenian Brotherhood.

Jamesy urged that nothing hurried should be done, but that they should carefully deliberate on the proposal, and Peter replied sharply that he never did anything without deliberation. Tom here squeezed in a remark about the appearance of the conspirators in the play—"The Peep o' Day Boys"—which they had all seen the week before, and in which the conspirators wore slouched hats, smoked long clay pipes, and talked in whispers.

The recollection of this play had an instant effect upon the company; and Peter, after he had taken his revolver from his pocket and laid it on the table, suggested in a whisper that they might send out for pipes. Accordingly Jamesy, who was treasurer, was empowered by resolution, duly proposed, seconded and supported, to draw 7½d. from the exchequer; and Tom was given 2½d. in one hand and 5d. in the other, with instructions not to mix them. With the 2½d. he was to go to a shop in Chapel Lane, where they sold home-made "brandy-balls," penny toys, bread, apples, crubeens, and other commodities:—

"Ye know the shop I mean?" said Peter.

"Well," replied Tom, lifting his eyebrows and

the left corner of his upper lip, "of course, I do. 'Twould be a queer thing, indeed, if I didn't know Biddy-Coo-Coo's."

He was to buy five clay-pipes at Biddy's, and afterwards to go over to the Square to Mrs. Flemings for an ounce of the mildest tobacco which she had. Bob McCarthy made a suggestion just as Tom was setting out, and that was that he was to be sure to buy the tobacco loose and not in a packet, because Mrs. Fleming gave good measure when she weighed anything.

It was not long until Tom returned with his purchases and laid them before the President.

"An' I comin' near the house I thought I saw Uncle Michael, so I darted into Crowley's doorway on a sudden an' broke the stim o' wan o' the pipes," said Tom. "But ye can gi'me the broken wan an' 'twill be all right."

Shortly after this the five pipes were alight, and Bob McCarthy was making more smoke than any of the others. Tom was almost in the beginning seized with a violent fit of coughing, and his eyes watered.

"What good would you be in a Revolutionary Society—a fellow that can't smoke," said Bob McCarthy.

"Maybe, I can smoke as well as you," retorted Tom, hotly, "only that the stim o' my pipe is shorter than any o' yours."

Peter now broached the subject of a seizure of arms; and suggested that the society should go out in a body some evening to the Ballytown mountains, for, in case of an insurrection, it was necessary to know all the fastnesses and passes of the hills.

"But is there any man here," asked Peter, breaking off from the general trend of his remarks; "is there any man here who wouldn't die for Ireland?"

"Well, begor, I would any day," instantly responded Tom, and all the others said likewise.

However, this did not quite satisfy Peter, so he informed them that they would all have to swear that they would die for their country if called upon. This they were about to do, when Tom remarked that it was wrong to take unnecessary oaths. Peter, who was not as scrupulous in these matters as Tom, gave way, and said that it would be sufficient if they declared their readiness to sacrifice their lives whilst he held his revolver over their heads.

Peter had taken up his revolver and was discussing with the others the form which the declaration should take, when a sudden thought stirred within Tom and he interrupted the proceedings with the remark:—"Hould on a minit, Pether. I think I might as well put a 'crow-bar' against the door afraid pa might come in of a sudden an' catch us smokin'."

This remark, and the action that followed it, had

the effect of easing the high tension to which the nerves of the members had been strung; and before Peter had time to bring back that state of necessary excitement, in which alone, he instinctively felt, he could with any dignity administer the declaration, Bob McCarthy, who was puffing away at his third pipeful, grew deadly pale, and, taking the pipe from his mouth, cast it from him, and it broke into smithereens in the corner. The members at once appreciated the fact that nothing but a very serious cause would prompt Bob McCarthy to do anything so wanton as the casting forth of a pipe and tobacco, and they were not at all surprised when a moment afterwards Bob put his head helplessly on one side, and, letting himself fall from his chair, stretched full length, with a long-drawn groan, upon the floor. Tom, though he uttered an exclamation of pity, was, within the depths of his heart, by no means sorry for the calamity that befell Bob; for when Tom observed him puffing away as if against time, and fill-his pipe for the third time, he knew that it was his well-known greed that was prompting him, and that his object was to get more than his share of what was going.

Peter, robbed of his chance of administering a declaration under a revolver to a revolutionary society, did not feel any compunction when the idea struck him that he might make romantic capital out of the

new and unexpected turn of events. He accordingly said: —

"Let us suppose we are in an insurrection and that Bob has been wounded."

"Let's," echoed Tom, with delight; and, going over to the table, he took the bottle of red ink and suggested that a wounded man should have blood about him. This was agreed to, and Bob, even had he wished to do so, was too feeble to protest. His forehead was accordingly besmeared, and a handkerchief tied round it.

"We must have a sentry for fear of a surprise," said Jamesy.

Tom was told off for sentry duty, and "Sarsfield" was given him as the pass-word.

He took the "crow-bar" from the door, and, going out into the yard, he stuck it in the ground and tried his best to look like the picture of Napoleon, when that great man kept guard in place of the sleeping sentry. Though "Sarsfield" was the pass-word, Tom had fully made up his mind that, were he challenged by anyone, he would reply: —

"Tom is the word, and Tom is the man."

After a stretch on the floor of about ten minutes' duration, Bob McCarthy began to feel better, and as he did he was in no way disinclined to play the honoured part of the wounded insurgent. He was led from the out-house, leaning on the arm of Peter

on one side and Jamesy on the other. Maurice Casey brought up the rear with the hanging lamp, and Tom led the way with a pitch-fork over his shoulder—for the crow-bar was too heavy.

The destination of the party was the stable at the end of the yard, and what they were to do when they got there Tom, Jamesy, Bob, nor Maurice did not trouble to think about, for these matters were, by common consent, left to the superior initiative of Peter. Peter, as a matter of fact, had no plans upon this occasion, but no doubt he would think of something before they got to the stable.

However, on their way they met Larry coming to meet them. Larry was careful not to approach too near, but delivered his message at a reasonable distance.

"The masther says that 'tis nine o'clock, and that 'tis time for Masther Peter and Masther Tom to come in, an' for th' other boys to go home."

At this moment an idea struck Peter.

"I say," said he, "let's 'cruist' him."

Before Larry had time to turn a volley of hay rope and other missiles went whizzing round his head, the wounded man being one of the most vigorous of the combatants.

The one-sided battle might have gone on for much longer only for the uproar which Maurice

Casey made, and which caused Patrick O'Kelly to open the back door and call out: —

"Stop that damn row, do that, or I'll give ye something to shout for."

The fighting party sought cover after this, locked up the out-house quietly; and the first meeting of the O'Kelly Literary League was over.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE COMMITTEE SIT.

We must now return to Patrick O'Kelly. During the day after the night when we saw him abruptly leave the Ballytown Patriotic and Literary Club, he attended industriously to his business affairs. His manner was unusually mild, and he took Kitty on his knee after dinner, and, noticing that two buttons were missing from her boots, he took a pound note out of his pocket and placed it in her hand.

"Buy yerself a nice new pair o' boots out o' that an' do what you like wud the change, an' don't let on anything to yer mother an' she'll wondher."

And Patrick O'Kelly kissed his daughter—a most demonstrative proceeding for him, for, as we know, he was a man without any "nonsense"—and he promised to drive her and Tom out to Killogan to see the "Patron" on the following Sunday.

Mrs. O'Kelly wore her sweetest expression during the whole day, and her following of beggars, who called regularly at the house seven days in the week for the last twenty years and never called in vain, wondered at the extra amount of bread and meat and other descriptions of charity which they re-

ceived; and old Maggie Cronin, who had come regularly at half-past two for her penny—twopence on a Saturday—ever since her husband was killed on the railway, three years ago, got sixpence.

Mrs. O'Kelly, gliding into the parlour, found Tom, as he often was to be found, with his chin resting on his hand, looking very lonely and thoughtful. She sat down by his side and asked him why he looked so sad.

"I don't like to see you lookin' like that, boy; I'd rather be sad meself than see any of ye sad—There now, laugh."

And when Tom looked up and laughed, his mother put her arms round his neck and he felt two wet drops fall upon his forehead.

"I may be able to send ye to college after all, and ye can be anything ye like, a lawyer or a doctor or anything, for there's a great change comin' over ye're father."

There was a long pause after this, and Mrs. O'Kelly smoothed her apron on her knee. Then she commenced building castles about Tom's future career, and how, when he was a great man up in Dublin, she would come up and see him, and how he would come down to Ballytown every Christmas and summer, and how proud she would feel walking to last Mass by his side.

There is nothing new or strange in these dreams

of Mrs. O'Kelly; they represent merely the eternal throb of the mother's heart.

Tom and his mother were not together more than a quarter of an hour when Hannah put her head in through the doorway.

"Plaize, ma'am, is it twenty minits or an hour and twenty minits that I'm to lave the chickens in the oven."

"Wisha, get along wud ye, do that; you're me heart's scald for a good-for-nothing, stupid woman," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"Well, ma'am," retorted Hannah, "I may be good for nothing an' stupid—an' if I am it isn't right to blame me for it, for 'twas the way God made me—but it displeases me to be called a woman, ma'am. I'm not so old as all that, thanks be to God."

"That'll do now, I want no more of your answers," said Mrs. O'Kelly. "I'd rather do all the work meself than be following you about tellin' ye do this an' do that. Run upstairs now an' finish the rooms an' I'll look after the dinner meself. An' mind now ye sweep the rooms properly an' put tea leaves down, an' don't sweep the sweepin's under the beds like ye did last week."

"Very well, ma'am," replied Hannah, humbly, and faded from view.

"Well," said Mrs. O'Kelly when Hannah had gone, "I never have a chicken for the dinner but I

think of all those grand roast fowl that we didn't touch at Mary's weddin', an' that we had to pay for. I can't leave them out o' me head."

Tom who, the moment the word "chicken" was mentioned, was waiting for the inevitable reference to the wedding breakfast, began to laugh.

"Wisha, we were a lot o' fools then, an' no mistake," said he. "D'ye remember Uncle Michael an' the milk."

"And the knives an' forks," chimed in Mrs. O'Kelly.

"An' Andrew's face when pa commenced cuttin' his tobacco wud one o' the carvin' knives," continued Tom.

"An' the fright the waithers got when 'himself' jumped up."

"Begor," said Tom, as he and his mother rose to leave the parlour, "do ye know what I'll do—I'll roast the ould chicken for ye meself."

"Well, I wouldn't doubt ye for a lad," said Mrs O'Kelly.

During the night of this day the committee meeting was held, and great surprise was felt at the fact that Patrick O'Kelly failed to turn up. A few of the members having some confused recollections of their proceedings of the previous night, felt somewhat ashamed of themselves. As to the cause of Patrick's absence, they were left to their own

conjectures and to the information supplied by Corcoran, who related how he met Patrick in the morning, when the latter declared that he was done with politics and drink, and that in future he would mind his business. This news damped very much the ardour of the committee, but arrangements for the demonstration had to be made, whoever might drop out; for it would not do at all if Mr. High Faluter, M.P., found apathy in Ballytown, of all places in the country, for Ballytown was recognised as the great stronghold of Twaddleite principles.

There was plenty of work on hands for the committee, and they had no time to waste in bemoaning the defection of Patrick O'Kelly. There were two bands—the Sons of Ireland Brass, and the Wolfe Tone Fife and Drum—to be arranged with. The Fife and Drum was the more difficult to manage, for Jim Canty, who was bandmaster, took out a summons against Corcoran about five months previously. The case arose out of an alleged trespass in Canty's back yard on the part of some hens of Corcoran, but the case was decided against the plaintiff, who had to pay costs. Ever since that time the Wolfe Tone Fife and Drum was inclined to be cantankerous and wobbly; for, as Canty said, it was as much as any man could do to remain on the same side as Corcoran. However, Mr. P. J. X. T. O'Callaghan, the junior reporter on the "Ballytown Echo," who had

put in a paragraph recently praising Canty's reciting of "Shamus O'Brien," at the Workmen's Club concert, said that they might leave the Wolfe Tone Fife and Drum to him, for that Canty would do anything for him since he compared him to Barry Sullivan.

One of the chief difficulties which the committee had to face was the question of speakers at the demonstration.

It is well known that there is no dearth of impassioned orators in even the remotest part of Ireland, for as empty talk is the art of saying nothing, and taking half an hour and a cart-load of adjectives to say it, the low state of education and the absence of the habit of thinking characteristic of modern Ireland, in no way militates against, but indeed helps considerably to swell, the flood of such eloquence. Even the sourèst Irish pessimist, before whose eyes everything in the county appears to be going downhill, must make an exception in favour of declamation.

It was not the dearth of speakers—for, as Corcoran said, "Sure, damn it, there's no end to them"—but the superabundant supply that presented the difficulty to the committee. The first decision was that Patrick O'Kelly, whatever his new views on politics and drink might be, should at all costs be induced to propose the principal resolution. Who was to second it ?

"I don't think ye cud have a betther man than Mike Walsh," said Uncle Michael O'Kelly. "He's a P.L.G., an' he has a power of influence wud the counthry people who buy their groceries at his shop."

"Yerrah, if ye wor to have Mike spake," said Corcoran, "ye'd dhrive half the dacent men away from our side."

"You're sayin' that because he had the betther o' ye over that horse he sould ye," retorted Uncle Michael.

"He didn't have the betther o' me, an' ye know it well—for 'twas all a damn lie to say that the horse had the spavins."

"Don't be thryin' to get out of it now. Didn't ye tell me cousin Jer, that he did ye fair and square."

"It's a lie for ye. I never said anything o' the sort."

"Well," chimed in a third, "I heard Jer sayin' it anyhow."

"Ordher, ordher," exclaimed the chairman, "ye're wandherin' from the question, for sure 'tisn't the horse ye're going to have secondin' the resolution. Where's this we wor? Oh, aye, about Mike Walsh."

"Well, all I can say is, I'll lave the committee if that blaa'guard is allowed to spake," said Corcoran.

"Well, anything for paice sake. Suppose we get Dr. Sullivan," suggested a third.

"What," said another, "Sullivan, is it!—ould Jim

Sullivan's son! I remember his father when he was glad to ring a bell outside an auction. Have him to spake an' Andy O'Kelly comin' round to us fast besides! Arrah, go asleep, boy, for it's dhramin' y'are."

It was ten o'clock before the speakers were decided upon, and even after that the debating went on over their humble personalities.

"I agreed to them," said Corcoran. "For sure, damn it, we must agree to something—but if this demonstration isn't the break up of the Twaddleites in Ballytown me name isn't Corcoran at all."

Patrick O'Reilly, the hon. secretary, read the poster which he had drafted, and it was approved of unanimously. It ran as follows:—

"Ireland a Nation.

"To the men of Ballytown and surrounding districts.

"Men of Ireland, assemble in your thousands and your tens of thousands on the 31st inst., to welcome your illustrious leader, High Faluter, Esq., M.P., whose burning eloquence has oft shaken the floor of the English House of Commons, in denunciation of the wrongs of our glorious and immortal but ill-treated country. Come together and show by your enthusiasm that the cause of Owen Roe, of Sarsfield, of Wolfe Tone is still alive and burning in your

hearts. Come together, Twaddleites, in the sacred cause of Unity and show that no traitors or Tweedleites can obstruct the glorious destiny of our land. Come together, men of our historic county, and show to the world, to our foreign enemies and our domestic traitors, that the Twaddleites of Ballytown are determined to march shoulder to shoulder in one united body, and leave no stone unturned until our loved land is, in the burning and inspired words of our immortal national poet: —

> "Great, glorious and free,
> First flower of the earth
> And first gem of the sea."
> "God Save Ireland."

The reading of this draft by Patrick O'Reilly was listened to with the greatest satisfaction. There was general applause at the finish; and, as the meeting was breaking up, Corcoran said that, in his opinion, the language was equal to anything ever uttered by Thomas Francis Meagher or Isaac Butt.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH WE SEE THE LOCAL LEADERS AS SOME OTHER PEOPLE SEE THEM.

THE next evening every dead wall in Ballytown was plastered with posters; and the small boys coming from school spelled their way through them. There was no doubt about it that demonstrations of all kinds were very popular with the small boys of the town; although, in this instance, they did not anticipate half the sport they had when the street preachers came to "spread the light" amongst the Papists. The girls from the convent school, and the girls from the poor school, also liked demonstrations. The girls from the poor school liked them better than those from the convent school, because there were less home restrictions upon them, and they were free to follow the band and look at the fights—if there should happen to be any.

To the majority of the quiet, grown-up inhabitants of Ballytown, demonstrations came as a relief; they looked upon them as a species of circus with no charge to go in. And as they offered a new subject for political disputations, even the Tweedleites looked forward with pleasure to the coming of High Faluter.

"Did you ever hear the like?" asked Mrs. Casey, the widow lady who kept one of the hotels, as she sat at the head of her tea-table, amongst a few friends, on the evening of the day upon which the posters were put up. "Did you ever hear the like. Murty Cremmins goin' to talk. Well that bangs Banagher, and Banagher bangs the little dish. What does an ignorant man like him know. If he was anything to look at itself, but as my Jamesy says of him, 'he has a face like three dabs of a stick in a mud wall.' However, it isn't for me to say anything against the meeting for, though this is a Tweedleite hotel, I always do extra business when the Twaddleites have demonstrations."

"It's a great pity that they should be divided as they are," said Miss Lavery, a maiden lady who had read history. "For I can assure you—and you know I have some knowledge of history—that the way in which Ireland has been treated is simply shameful."

"Of course, of course," said Mrs. Mangan, a practical woman who kept the principal bookseller's and stationery shop in Ballytown. "We all know about that, but what good is all this nonsense that they get on with. Not one of them believes what they say, and a great number are making a good thing out of it—not that I, being a business woman myself, would say anything against them for that—for we all must

live—if they'd be honest an' own up to it an' call themselves business men and not patriots and heroes. Patriots, indeed! If the like of Murty Cremmins and Patrick O'Kelly—God help his poor wife, for she's a good woman—if the like o' them would look after their business instead of talking an' rawmaishing about what they don't understand, 'twould be much better for the country and for themselves."

"Oh, that is all very well, Mrs. Mangan," said Miss Lavery. "But you don't know history and you haven't ideals. You see only bread and butter in everything. If you had read the Penal Laws——"

"Well," retorted Mrs. Casey, "perhaps I don't know as much as you, Miss Lavery, for in my time there was very little spent on schooling. But I know the Penal Laws aren't in it now. I'm no friend to the English, but what has the Penal Laws to do with all the goings-on that takes place now-a-days? Does the Penal Laws make them drink, Miss Lavery? Does the Penal Laws make them carry on like fools talking nonsense to ignorant people that don't know the differ. I don't know what's wrong with the country nor how to cure it, for I don't pretend to be clever, nor to have read history, Miss Lavery, but one thing I do know—the men that talk most an' speechify in those days are no great credit to their country, an' the decent, honest, hard-working people—an' thank God

there are plenty o' them in Ballytown yet--take no notice o' them, for they know them too well an' are sick o' them."

"I see," said Miss Lavery, "that you can't understand. I have read what great men have said about it, and we will never be satisfied until the epitaph of Emmet is written, and until we have our own Parliament back again."

"As for that," said Mrs. Casey, "my son Jamesy was sayin' to me the other day—of course, I don't know whether he is right or not—but he said that when there was a Parliament here that 'twas all Protestants were in it, and that the real poor Irish were trodden down as bad as they are now, an' worse."

"Ah," said Miss Lavery. "But Grattan and Flood would have altered all that if England hadn't robbed the Parliament. The people were behind them and would have died for them."

"Well, that may be as you say," replied Mrs. Casey. "But my son Jamesy says that most of the people at that time didn't know that such a man as Grattan was alive at all, for he was as good as a foreigner to them, seeing that they only spoke Irish at that time."

"Well," said Miss Lavery, with a look of contempt upon her face, "that is a most ignorant and monstrous statement. It's most nonsensical. In all the Irish history books that I have read I have never

seen that stated, so that it cannot be true. Why, nobody but ignorant peasants in Connaught spoke Irish since the time of Strongbow."

"Well, Miss Lavery," said Mrs. Casey, stiffly, "I may be ignorant, an' what I say may be nonsense. I only know what my son Jamesy tells me, an' he says that the real Irish didn't trouble nor care much about any of these Parliaments, for that they had their own laws, lived as they liked and spoke only Irish.

"Without going back to ancient history," said Mrs. Kavanagh, whose husband was a strong Twaddleite, "if we had unity we'd get everything we wanted; an' as far as I can see, we'll never have unity until all the Tweedleites are smashed root and branch throughout the country."

"You will never smash the Tweedleites," said Miss Lavery, hotly; "and I could show you from history that it is High Faluter and his gang that are the curse of the country. Only for him and his hangers-on—I wouldn't be surprised if some of them were in the pay of the Government—we'd have had unity long ago."

"Now, now," exclaimed old Miss Murphy, who played the organ in the chapel, "don't let ye bring politics into it at all, or it's ye're tempers ye'll be losin'. What do women know of these things at all? What I always say is that, if the people would be sober, an' stop their cursin' an' blaa'guardin', an' go

regularly to their religious duties, that a blessin' would come on the country."

Mrs. Mangan happening at this point to remark that Mrs. Moloney owed three weeks' bread bill, political and national considerations, which we have just heard discussed with such acumen, were lost sight of, and the rumours current about the financial position of Mr. Moloney and other matters of a similar nature were the sole subjects of conversation during the remainder of the visit.

At half-past eight o'clock, when Mrs. Mangan was walking home to her shop, she had to dodge her way through the usual crowds that paraded the principal thoroughfares of Ballytown every night. The young men of the working class—wiry, well-built and kindly looking—walking three or four abreast, or perhaps in tens two-deep, with a concertina; the young girls with hats, and the young girls with shawls over their heads, were as numerous as usual As Mrs. Mangan was passing near the post-office, Mr. Sandy Mackintosh, the red-headed Scotch postmaster, was hurrying along with his face as usual bent downwards, and he collided with one of a row of girls. The girl threw back her shawl and her pair of merry blue eyes scanned the postmaster for a few seconds. Then she said with a delightful drawl:—"Wisha, the divil take ye're foxy poll—God forgive me for sayin' so."

The public-houses were nearly all full, and the other shops contained a few listless gossipers, lolling at either side of the counters.

The only ostensible place of "sweetness and light" open was the Literary, Scientific and Archæological Society, and that contained an audience of twenty-nine souls, including Miss Condon and her "faungsay" (*fiancé*), Ferdinand de la Courcey, the intellectual bank clerk. This audience were assembled to hear Mr. Williams, the man of independent means, lecture on "Schiller."

When Mrs. Mangan reached her shop she looked over the records of her day's business, and then sat down and wrote an order to a Dublin wholesale house for 200 copies of "Tit-Bits," 150 copies of "Answers," 50 copies of the "Police Budget," 3 copies of the "Irish Magazine," 320 copies of the "Family Herald," and 1 copy of the "Gaelic Journal."

"What a lot of knowledge the people must have in their heads now-a-days, to be sure," said she to herself. "Though when I was a little thing they read next to nothing—very few of them could read—and yet the people in them times were smarter an' better behaved. It's a topsy-turvy world, to be sure."

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH THE READER IS BROUGHT INTO THE BAR OF THE ROYAL HOTEL.

Dr. Andrew O'Kelly dropped into the select bar of the Royal Hotel a few evenings before the demonstration was to take place. He often dropped in, and on one occasion it is recorded that he literally dropped out.

The bar of the Royal was a kind of neutral ground on which the Tweedleites and Twaddleites intermingled freely, but it was mostly frequented by those who considered themselves superior to all who were prominently associated with either. For though few people except the Protestants—and here it may be explained that the term "Protestants" is used throughout this book to designate generally the foreign racial element in Ireland—cursed the National League publicly, most of the *elite*, and nearly all the "intellectual minority" of Ballytown looked down upon it and those associated with it as vulgar, even when they condescended to admit its justice.

The mental calibre of the Royal Hotel bar gang aspired to be above the miserable bickerings and

trashy sentimentality of the patriots, and there was now and again to be discerned in the conversation carried on in the select bar a faint echo of the shallow cynicism of the London Johnnie.

One section of the gang was embodied in a kind of informal club, the sole privilege of membership being that on certain evenings each one drank as much as he could hold; the items were entered on a slate, and at turning out time the total was divided, and each paid an equal share.

This was an admirable arrangement for Mrs. Sheehan, the proprietress, and for members like Jacky Grogan, who was known during one evening to have drunk thirty bottles of beer. If a stranger coming into Ballytown, with a letter of introduction to this gentleman, were to ask the first man he met "Where does Mr. Jack Grogan live," the man would have looked puzzled for some minutes and then he would say:—"Oh, aye, is it Jacky Beer, ye mane?"

When this select company was engaged in the noble art of breaking drinking records, the humour and good fellowship was of such a remarkable order that any chance Englishman who paid a visit to Ballytown, and was at all companionable, was inevitably brought by those patriots, who liked to impress strangers with the distinctive glories of their land, into the bar of the Royal, in order that he might have an opportunity of witnessing the fine,

jolly, devil-may-care sporting fellows the real Irish are.

On occasions of this kind the real Irish gentlemen of the select bar of the Royal would play up vigorously to the part that tradition has assigned to them; they would invariably affect much more rowdyism and coarseness of manner than even the habits of their lives had accustomed them to, and would generally wind up by bashing in one another's hats.

The Royal was a favourite resort of many of the Cromwellian Protestants who had become more Irish than the Irish themselves—as far as drinking went. The bank clerks, when they could spare a little, liked to be seen going in there, and many of the well-paid public officials of the town spent a considerable portion of their lives in the select bar.

The young men serving their time to the grocery and drapery business, and who, as their people had a little money and intended setting them up, were not to be confounded with mere shop-boys for whom all the *elite* had an unqualified contempt, were also frequent visitors. Of course, professional men, like Dr. Andrew O'Kelly, Mr. Denis Cahill, the solicitor, or Signor Michael Connelli, the Italian professor, were lions of the place.

On the particular night in question when Dr. Andrew entered there were not many present, for it

was early yet and there had been races at Ballydunkin, forty miles away by rail; and if you weren't at the races, perhaps, you might stay indoors until late at night by the way that you were.

Dr. Andrew saluted two well-paid officials and also Mr. Denis Cahill and Henry Barry.

Henry Barry, whose father was reputed to be wealthy, was talking volubly on the drama. He read several of the London tittle-tattle, mainly-about-everything papers every week, and was chiefly instrumental in getting up the amateur plays that sometimes sent a ripple over the surface of the Ballytown respectable classes. There was not a man nor a woman on the London Music Hall stage, with all the particulars of whose life and performances—as far as they appeared in the tittle-tattle papers—he was not fully conversant; and he often wrote the critique in the "Ballytown Echo," when "The Lights of London," or "Did He Shoot Her," or some other great play came to the town. Nay, it was widely known that he wrote a play himself called "The Blood-stained Knife—a drama of London life in three acts," which anyone who loved pure drama might go to his father's house and read in manuscript, and welcome.

Mr. Denis Cahill listened to Mr. Henry Barry with open mouth, wondering all the time what a power of knowledge he had, and feeling that Ballytown was no place for a man of his parts.

Mr. Cahill had a great opinion of the natural ability and intellect of his countrymen, and his theory was that the destiny of Ireland was to breed raw human material which was to be exported between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two to London, New York, and other places, and turned into Lord Chief Justices, Boss Crokers, Bernard Shaws, and other highly-developed, finished articles. Mr. Denis Cahill's father was in the export egg and goose trade, and he in his turn did not believe that half the eggs or geese were raised that might be raised in the country. But the elder Cahill was a mean and materialistic man; for whereas, Mr. Denis would give London thousands and thousands of 18-year-old men, born, reared, and educated in the country for nothing, old Cahill wouldn't send off a dozen of eggs except for value received.

One of the missions of the "Ballytown Echo" was to scout round for all the great men of the Empire, the cost of whose early rearing, feeding and education was borne by Ireland, and exclaim:—"See, what a great country we are." Another mission of the "Ballytown Echo" was to breathe forth prayers for the destruction "of this nefarious Empire upon the wicked deeds of which the sun never sets." It called Irishmen who served it traitors, and in another column it carried on a Civil Service Examination department. It advised the young men of enterprise

and intellect of Ballytown to try their fortunes and shed honour on their country in other lands, and its leading motto was—"Ireland for the Irish."

Mr. Denis Cahill followed these mental gymnastics with the profoundest sympathy, for, though not a public patriot—being too respectable for that—he gave way to no one in his feeling of love for, and desire to serve, his native land.

Though holding favourable views on the general question of the ability of Irishmen he had an unmixed contempt for Ireland, as he knew it in the concrete. After his ninth whiskey and soda—he had just finished his tenth by this time—he usually became anxious to tell the world about him freely, unreservedly, and in forcible language what he thought about Ireland.

"I've come to the conclusion," said he, laying down the glass, "that we're a rotten lot—a damn rotten lot. In Australia, in New Zealand, in America under the star-spangled banner, in England, in short, in every land under the wide canopy of heaven, Irishmen have won for themselves places of honour an' renown. But it is all stick in the mud in this blasted counthry. What is there for a man here? You get up, you do your bit o' work—if you've any to do—you take a few drinks, perhaps you get dhrunk, you go to bed and you get up again. There's no life at all in 'id. We read what

great things they do in England, but we can't copy them at all no matther how hard we thry. An' I don't know even that Home Rule 'll do us any good only that there'll be a few more jobs going about for them that can get them."

At this point Mr. Denis paused to take a sip from his whiskey; the effort to think on general questions was never agreeable to him, so he wound up his luminous comments with the remark: —

"There's something rotten somewhere; we're a damn rotten race."

Mr. Henry Barry, who by this time was also well in his cups, had his turn at philosophising when Mr. Denis had ceased. He traced all the vulgarity and crudeness of Irish life to the lack of a proper supply of plays.

"If we could only get a few of the London 'stars' like Forbes Robertson and Dan Leno to come often to Ballytown, I tell you it would not be long until you'd see the difference 'twould make in the manners of the town."

Whilst these two were laying down their views, almost the identical views that they laid down any night during the last five years, Dr. Andrew O'Kelly was silent, and the two highly-paid public officials were dozing asleep. Dr. Andrew had no solution for the dry rot which had seized Irish society, but he was clever enough to see the folly in all the

maudlin philosophy that the highly respectable tipplers of Ballytown whiled away their evenings with. Mr. Denis Cahill, Mr. Henry Barry, and their like were nothing only a source of mild amusement to Dr. Andrew O'Kelly.

Just as Barry had finished his last remark a sound of horse-play was heard at the front door and a strapping, well-built but hatless youth was pushed into the bar, and a shout of laughter followed him.

Dr. Andrew made a gesture to the others, and having learned from Mrs. Sheehan that there was a fire in the coffee-room, he, Cahill, Barry, and the two highly-paid public officials, who had been specially aroused from their slumbers, left the bar.

"Here, gi'me me hat, now; that's enough o' that damn larkin'. What are ye goin' to dhrink?" asked the strapping youth, whose name was Thomas Malone, of the six others who were stumbling in.

Three of these were Cromwellian Protestants and bank clerks, "damn decent fellows, though their sisters wouldn't look on the same side of the street as an ordinary person was on—stuck-up cats." The other three were natives who believed in enjoying life in a boisterous fashion while they were in it, and, as for National Leagues or any things like that, they would not join anything except they were paid for it—they were "none of your damn fools."

Thomas Malone was a Nationalist who had written

stirring ballads in the "Ballytown Echo" and the "Sunburst of Ireland Magazine"—on the strength of which performances he was given an honourable place in a well-known and exhaustive volume on the poets of Ireland—but since he was promoted to the position of traveller for Mr. Mashtub's Brewery, and got into the society of Cromwellian and of other superior persons, he dropped off writing soul-stirring ballads, and his views on national matters became a little cynical.

"But I say," said one of the Cromwellians, "I thought you were a member of that—what's this they call it—that Land League Club, you know?"

"Ah, I've dropped that," replied Malone. "I'm out of it a long time now. I couldn't stand it any longer. I'm a democrat, and I believe that wan man is as good as another, but, damn me, I dhraw the line at counther-jumpers—when they commenced lavin' in grocers' curates I thought it time to clear out."

"An' aren't you a Nationalist at all now."

"Oh, indeed, I am. I'm a Nationalist, right enough. I believe in Home Rule, but damn me if I'd care to see the counthry in the hands of the chaps that are sportin' about now. The wrong men are on the top; that's what's the matther. Look at George Clancy bossin' it down at the Club, and 'twas only the other day that he was dhrivin' a bread van. You

can't expect decent people to be led be them chaps."

"But anyhow, George Clancy is betther than some of the members of Parliament, as bad as he is," said the Cromwellian.

"It's thrue for you; he is, then. But sure the members of Parliament are a rotten lot, too. They're all on the make; an' I wouldn't believe daylight out o' wan o' their mouths. They go about coddin' the people. You bet, me boy, they watch their chances. They're none o' your damn fools either; they keep their eye on number wan as well as any of us."

"That'll do now, drop your politics an' talk sense," said one of the bank clerks. "What's the betting on the Grand National?"

"That just reminds me," said Malone. "I won two sovereigns on Wild Wolf to-day, an' I must spend some of it. Here, dhrink up an' have another; we'll all get damn well drunk to-night."

This last remark evidently struck the right note, for there was a general alertness visible at once about the company.

Other young gentlemen now began to drop in. There was John Kirwan, better known as "tickle the bricks," in consequence of his habit of invariably walking close to the wall and playing on it with his fingers, and Mickey Foley, who was noted even in Ballytown for his sanguinary language. Mickey

was a great braggart, and was apprenticed to the drapery. Before he had a drink from Malone he explained how he had met James Corcoran as he was passing the Albert Edward Hotel, and how he had to go in and have something with him, and how just as he was coming by the National and Patriotic Club Michael Connors dragged him in and insisted on his having a whiskey and soda.

We who are privileged to see all Mickey's movements can vouch for it that he was lifting bales of cloth until half an hour previously, and since then he only had time to wash his face, turn his cuffs, and walk twice past the Royal for the purpose of finding out who was inside and what likelihood there would be of free entertainment. Mickey will only have one more drink to-night, but he will probably have to be helped home and will conduct himself in a rowdy manner; for, to be thought a harum-scarum, hard-drinking, foul-speaking, going-fast-to-the-devil youth, was the height of Mickey's ambition. To-morrow he will tell a long tale to his fellow drapery assistants of his debauch of the previous night, how he drank fourteen bottles of beer, five brandies and sodas, and we don't know how many whiskies. None of his comrades will believe him, most of them will despise him, but one or two, who are in training for a similar career, and who are swayed by like ennobling ambitions, will sympathise

with him and comment approvingly on the iron constitution he must have to be able to stand such racketing.

"I say," said Malone, "do you see that chap that came in now for a packet of cigarettes and slunk out again—a mane-livered little brat. That chap earns plenty o' money, but I never saw the sign o' dhrink on him yet. He's married an' goes home every evenin' afther his business and dhrives out his wife an' kids in an' ould pony an' car he has. He's a great fellow for readin' these ould stones and the notches on them, an' he says that no wan can call himself an Irishman if he doesn't know Irish. Did you ever hear such b——y rot. He's wan o' these low calculatin' hounds that just takes one or two dhrinks an' no more, because it wouldn't be good for him. His name is O'Leary, but I don't know how the hell he came be that name, for he hasn't the real Irish rollickin' spirit at all. Damn me if I believe he was ever dhrunk in his life."

"Well," said one of the Cromwellians who was none too steady himself, "a man that can't get blind dhrunk—I say a man that blind——"

"What the divil are ye thryin' to say?" asked Malone.

"Look here, damn ye," retorted the Cromwellian, "if you don't address me as a gentleman ought to be addressed——"

"I'll address you how I like."

"Remember I'm a gentleman."

"I didn't care you were twenty gentlemen in wan I'll not be insulted be any man. Who the hell are you no more than anyone else?"

"Here, shake hands over it an' don't be goin' on wud your quarrellin'," interposed one of the five.

"I'll shake hands with any gentleman," replied the Cromwellian. "But I'm damned if I'll shake hands with any b——y Land Leaguer in Ballytown I'm a gentleman: remember that."

"Now, now," said Mrs. Sheehan, sharply from behind the bar, "I won't have fightin' in the hotel. If ye want to fight ye had better go outside."

"There you are," said Malone, with a sudden change in his manner, "she has our money an' damn me we can all go to hell now for all she cares. Here, let's be friends, boys, an' clear out of this cursed show."

And amid much jostling and swearing the three Cromwellians and other friends staggered out of the Royal Hotel bar.

"Well," said Mrs. Sheehan to an elderly customer, when the rowdy crowd had gone out, "I think Miss Murphy will be very foolish if she marries that Bennett, for I'm sure he'd drink her thousand pounds in less than a year; and, as for that Ryan, he's supposed to be reforming before he gets married to

Katie McCarthy, but as far as I can see 'twill be a sore day's business for the poor child, the day she marries him."

Katie McCarthy is now a widow, for her husband killed himself drinking in two years and a half; and Miss Murphy is a grass widow, for the four hundred pounds—not a thousand as was publicly supposed—only lasted fourteen months, and then Mr. Bennett went to America, and his wife started a school.

About half an hour after their rowdy exit from the Royal Hotel, Malone bade good-bye to his companions at the end of Patrick Street, and proceeded on his way home alone. He was by no means drunk, for he was now inured to hard drinking, and nature had blessed him with an iron constitution. He had to pass the Killogan Road, with the tall trees on either side, the branches of which almost formed a complete arch across the way, and broke up the moonlight into all manner of fantastic moving shapes. The soul of the vulgar sot of the Royal bar was stirred and chastened by the influences round him. His early efforts at poetry may have never gone beyond jingling sunburstry rhymes, but such as they were, they had come out of a generous heart, which had once freely responded to many of the finer notes of nature and humanity. He, too, like Tom and Peter, had planned insurrections, and

had, in his dreams, died scores of times on battlefields for his country's cause; he had dreamed dreams of great sacrifices; he had knelt at a pious mother's knee, and had learnt his first lessons there; he had grown up full of generous, if somewhat vague enthusiasms, until highly respectable Ballytown society cast its net round him and choked him. He found his natural growth suddenly arrested when he became familiar with the tone of his surroundings, the cringe and sneak after everything English, rendered all the more debasing by standing out in relief against the *opera bouffe* patriotism that accompanied it. Wherever he turned amongst the class he was thrown in with, there was a kind of living death, apathy hung over everything, mental stagnation, bad manners, dependence, and a low, cunning type of cynicism. Nature had put passions and brains into him; with the help of both he had been for many years sinking into a sot.

It is an easy thing, and a dangerous thing, to over-emphasise the influence of environment. Malone had a mind and a will of his own, and might have elected to play the man instead of the weakling, but we need not, nevertheless, deny him the palliation of his circumstances. In these lucid moments, as Malone passed underneath the trees, the freshness and honesty of early youth sprang up round his heart again and threw his life of the last three years

into all its vulgar, hideous relief. Something like tears of penance on his heart alternated with feelings of savage resentment and wounded vanity. "I am not worse than others; and I have been dragged to what I am." And then the manhood in him taunted him with permitting himself to be dragged anywhere. Has he not a will? Going down to the bed-rock of man's nature, what has he that he can really call his own but his Will? Abilities he got free from the hand of nature, accidental advantages, such as birth or education are not of his making, his natural disposition he did not create. Thrown into the vortex of life, all he can call his own is his power, his limited power, to will. Will struggling against ease, holding grimly by the Right against the Wrong, is the noblest fight on earth, and is the indispensable condition of all greatness in men and nations. Right and Wrong are, in the last analysis, the only things that count; and Will is all that man can call his own.

These considerations suggested themselves in ragged outline and in dim half-lights to Malone's mind as he walked along, for the sot cannot think clearly even in his lucid moments. To-morrow night, alas, he will be carried home drunk. As he refused to face boldly the accusations of his better self he found it convenient to drown them. If men of Irish temperament will not choose the better paths

for their enthusiasms and passions, they are liable to slake both in a way that reflects no credit on themselves. With many of us it is a choice between very high or very low. Public opinion and modern Anglo-Irish traditions dispute many of the paths to the very high. Those who uphold those mongrel Anglo-Irish traditions and make that public opinion —and they comprise every man and woman in the country—have a heavy responsibility on them, and the reckoning must come some day, here or elsewhere.

As we will not require Malone in our story any further we may as well here state that about seven years after the night we have been describing he died from the results of his dissipated life.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH TOM IS ILL, AND SEES AND HEARS MUCH IN CONSEQUENCE.

Mrs. O'Kelly would have it that it was in consequence of Tom's running about in the garden, a few days before, in his stocking vamps that he sickened; but Tom himself flouted the idea as if it could harm any boy to play about in the wet with his boots off.

Tom was secretly glad that he was ill, for he had not to go to school; a specially big fire was made for him in the parlour, where he sat on a big easy chair most of the day. Besides, he got boiled chicken and calves-foot jelly to eat, and Dr. Andrew bought him a real toy steam-engine, and Kitty would sit, and talk and play with him for many hours during the day at a stretch. Various people brought him books to read, and they all respected his well-known partiality for sensational works about Rapparees, in which the English got the worst of it.

"Is it up for Ireland" was Tom's invariable question when he was asked if he would like any particular book.

He liked to lean back in his easy chair, pretending to be asleep when people came in and said:

"How is little Tom to-day?"

"Poor little fellow, he is asleep, don't waken him."

And sometimes when he was aroused in order that he might be presented with a bag of sweets he would rub his eyes and yawn, and assume an innocent, angelic smile, and otherwise carry himself as if he had just awoke from a deep slumber.

Kitty and he would sit for hours looking out of the window and playing "people," which game consisted in taking sides and counting how many passed the window in either direction. They also made audible remarks upon the passers-bye. There was very nearly being a scene one day when Jeremiah Doherty, the wheelwright, passed the window. Jeremiah was reputed to have struck on the original idea of mending his watch by boiling it in the kettle. Wherever Jeremiah went—to a concert or a public meeting—a treble voice was sure to call out from one corner:—

"Who boiled the watch?"

And another treble voice from another corner would invariably reply:—

"Jerry Doherty."

In fact, Jerry's life was rendered miserable since he tried to cheat the watchmaker of his due. On this occasion Tom suddenly espied Jerry coming along with a flower in his coat.

"Wisha," said Tom, "here's ould 'Who boiled the watch' comin' along; let's call afther him."

Jerry who, unfortunately for himself, was extra sharp of hearing, grew pale in the face at once, and ran towards the window which Tom banged down.

"Ha, ha, me bould little jackeen," said Jerry, in a burst of passion, "when I catch you out I'll—I'll dirt your Sunday clothes for you, I will."

The only reply which Tom vouchsafed to give to this was to put out his tongue and flatten it and the top of his nose in defiance against the window pane. Tom's manners in many respects were the despair of Mrs. Tierney, who taught the family good breeding and deportment, as well as the piano.

But one of the chief privileges which Tom enjoyed during his illness was that he was allowed to be present during the family gossip in the evening. Mrs. Tierney was a frequent visitor; indeed, she was a welcome guest in very many of the highly respectable family circles of Ballytown. It may also be said, and readers may see a coincidence in it if they like, that she knew the worst that was to be known of every family in the town.

"Oh, Mrs. O'Kelly, it is a wicked world," she would exclaim, as she lifted up her eyes with an expression of horror. "I could tell you tales of what goes on in this very town that would make your hair stand on an end."

And then her voice would sink to a whisper, and however Tom might cock his ear he could not catch any of the whispered information.

Mrs. Tierney liked nothing better in the world than ham sandwiches, particularly those she got at the O'Kelly's house, for the latter were invariably thick and contained plenty of ham. She admitted that the sandwiches given out at the Williams', who lived on their means, were more in accord with the spirit of highly-genteel society; but then she liked ham and therefore refrained from making any comments to the O'Kellys about their sandwiches. Though in discussing matters with the Williams' she would sometimes say: —

"The O'Kellys, oh, the sandwiches these people make are like a side of bacon between two loaves of bread."

And when the Williams' sandwiches came up for comment one evening at Corcorans, Mrs. Tierney whispered to Mrs. Corcoran: —

"The Williams carry it too far; there's a medium in everything—but then you know the Williams are *mean*, or,"—lifting her voice—"perhaps, I wrong them; perhaps, they can't afford it."

Well, one evening Kitty as usual was told off to make sandwiches for Mrs. Tierney. When she had brought them in she gave Tom a kick on the shin on the sly, and, having winked at that innocent boy,

she left the parlour. Mrs. Tierney interrupted an account of how the Morrisseys ill-treated their servant-maid and stopped 2s. 6d. out of her wages because she broke a fourpenny plate, in order to take a sandwich.

"Ah," said Mrs. Tierney, "the worst is to come yet."

And with that she made a vigorous bite at one of the sandwiches. Her lips began to smack, her eyes watered, and she said:—

"Oh, my goodness, am I poisoned; water, water."

There was much excitement, and Mrs. O'Kelly said:—

"Only for two pins I'd smack that bold girl, and tell her father on her—the rude, unmannerly thing."

The sandwich that Mrs. Tierney had been eating was composed solely of bread and mustard. Tom pretended that he was asleep all the time, though any close observer could see his sides heaving; and no one suspected that it was the innocent boy who suggested the cruel deed.

Frequently when Mrs. Tierney went to the piano to play "O'Donnell Abu" or the "Wearin' o' the Green"—for she was in a superior way a patriotic woman, claiming descent from Brian Boru, Tom would go behind and imitate her, for Mrs. Tierney, being a professor of music as well as of French, played in no ordinary manner, and she swayed her

head, and held her hands, and looked at the music in ways different from any one else in Ballytown. Mrs. O'Kelly and the family encouraged Tom in this, though they all said that he was a very bold boy and should show more respect for his superiors.

Mrs. Tierney had no regard for the politicians.

"They are ruining the country with their ignorant goings-on, Mrs. O'Kelly, and driving the gentry out of it; and many of them that get into Parliament would be better employed behind their own counters."

But that was not Mrs. Tierney's hardest indictment against the politicians, or some of them. She knew, or professed to know, all about the private lives—at least such parts of them as did not redound to their credit—of every politician in Ballytown, and of many who had gone to Westminster.

"But sure, there's Mr. O'Grady, he's a great something in the League, and I'm sure a better man never lived; I see him regularly in the chapel nearly every morning when he is at home," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

Mrs. Tierney threw up her hands in astonishment at the innocence of some people.

"What!" said she. "Is that all you know of the hypocrisy and duplicity of the age? It was only yesterday I heard from a source that is quite trustworthy that Mr. O'Grady——"

Here she drew her chair nearer to Mrs. O'Kelly

and her voice sank to such a whisper that Tom cocked his ear in vain.

"But he is a teetotaller all his life," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

"That," said Mrs. Tierney, compressing her lips and bringing her hand down with a bang, "that only makes it all the worse."

Tom was too young to observe properly the struggle between two contrary forces in his mother's heart. She was kindness and charity herself, and she would as soon rob a man of his life as of his character. Mrs. Tierney's innuendos and speculations gave Mrs. O'Kelly's conscience many a serious trouble, and to say the truth the great gossip was oftener pulled up and admonished on her duty to her neighbour by Mrs. O'Kelly than by any other matron in the highly respectable circles of Ballytown. Mrs. O'Kelly never encouraged her to tell stories, and she did not believe one half of those that she blurted out.

"I declare I often think," Mrs. O'Kelly would say, "that the poor woman is not responsible for her tongue; it goes wig-wag, wig-wag like a machine."

Perhaps the chief extenuating fact concerning Mrs. Tierney's tongue was that she had been jilted twice, and at last made a most unhappy marriage. Could faith in man—seldom too robust a quality in those with a propensity for gossip—weather through an experience like that?

"I often wish," she once said in a wild burst of self-revelation, "I often wish that I was in a balloon and that the roofs of all the houses in Ballytown were lifted up, for I am sure I would find out a great deal worse than I have ever heard."

There were other visitors than gossippers to the O'Kelly household. Dr. Andrew frequently came, bringing with him a few of the best spirits in Ballytown. For though the gentlemen of the drinking bars, and a certain class of politicians made most noise in Ballytown, there were still many serious and sober people in the place.

It was because Ireland tried to be "respectable" by process of imitation that she became drunken and vulgar. Dr. Andrew, the brilliant but irresolute, periodically sickened of the Royal Hotel Bar, and sometimes he would go up and sit a whole evening with Ben Condon, the general smith, who, notwithstanding a certain amount of shallow pedantry arising from his habits of reading and thinking in an environment in which neither was reckoned highly respectable, was an able and original man. But what chance was there for an able man who was only a general smith in Ballytown, where Mr. Williams, who lived on his means and wore eye-glasses, was intellectual king, and presided like a genius over the tea-parties of the Historical and Archæological Society.

Dr. Andrew frequently brought several of his

brainy friends round to the O'Kelly household. There was old Dr. Maguiness, who was retired after a successful career in the colonies. He was a man of ideas and experience, but he had learned to look upon the future of Ireland with a feeling of despair. A year before he interested himself in the economic condition of the district, and agreed to give a course of lectures at the workmen's club; but before the date of the first lecture had arrived, James Corcoran heard that the doctor had said in conversation that Rent was an economic fact, and that whoever might receive it, that it could not be swept away. This set Corcoran's Irish national heart on fire, and at the next public meeting which he had the honour to address, he said:—

"I warn you, men of Ballytown, I warn you from this platform here to-night, against this doctrine that this designing factionist wants to implant in our minds. What! Are we to be told that Rent cannot be swept away, and lie down under it like kicked spaniels. Never! Never, I say. And, men of Ballytown, from this platform here to-night, I hurl back the vile slander down the recreant throat of the designing factionist who uttered it."

That same night a crowd of more or less well meaning ragamuffins hooted outside the doctor's house, and sent a stone through one of his windows;

so that the kindly old gentleman, who was in no humour for tackling a campaign of ragamuffinism and screech, shook his head sadly, and the proposed course of lectures was abandoned.

Perhaps the man whom Tom liked most was long, lankey, lean James Moynihan, a schoolmaster, who would glide into the room and sit quietly in a corner. One evening, when Mrs. O'Kelly said, "Well, James, when are you thinking of getting married," he blushed up scarlet, stuttered some incoherency and looked at his toes. But if James was more shy than a girl in her teens, he was a man to the centre of his heart, and his gentle manners and the kindly expression in his eyes touched Tom deeply, and that boy thought that he would sooner die defending James from English soldiers, than defending any of the other men who dropped into the parlour whilst he was ill. James was something of a bookworm, and also an Irish enthusiast. He was always shabbily dressed because he spent a lot of money on books and kept his mother and a delicate sister. He would have been a target for the ridicule of some of the young bloods of the Patriotic and National Club, who never read a book and who lived on their mothers' industry; and besides, as he was all but a teetotaller, he knew that he had no business in that home of patriotism undefiled. James being only a schoolmaster, was not very high up in the

social scale in highly respectable circles in Ballytown, and indeed nothing but Dr. Andrew's acknowledged leaning towards a mild form of Bohemianism would have saved him from dire social and professional consequences for fraternising with a mere schoolmaster. As it was, several wholesale grocers, who did most of their business in the retail (which was approached by a special door), looked askance at Dr. Andrew for his violation of the unwritten laws of Ballytown polite society.

We must now leave Tom, who is quickly getting well, so as to be free to go to the great demonstration, and turn our attention to the Misses Williams.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH THE MISSES WILLIAMS ORGANISE AN "AT HOME."

Ballytown highly respectable society is all of a flutter, for the Misses Williams have sent out invitations for an "At Home."

"At home, indeed," said Mrs. Mangan, when she heard the news; "faith, and it's there they are likely to stay, as far as I can judge, for the youngest of them is purty hardy now."

"At Homes" were quite an innovation in Ballytown some years ago, though we understand they are quite common now; but fortunately for some of the people who have them, our story deals with the last decade of the past century.

The Misses Williams were on the highly respectable hill-tops, ever scanning the eastern horizon, for the latest in modes and manners. They were no way singular in that, as a very large number of the females of highly respectable Ballytown were similarly occupied. But the Misses Williams were generally the first of Ballytown society who had the courage—a kind of perverted moral courage—to dump, as it were, the latest consignment of respectability from England into Ballytown.

The forthcoming "At Home" caused great amusement amongst the lower ranks of the highly respectables, but it was no amusing matter for the Misses Williams.

Mrs. Tierney, as an authority on deportment and other things, was specially invited to tea and a consultation.

The youngest Miss Williams was twenty-six on her last birthday—at least that was what *she* said: what other people said was that if she was hanging since she was thirty-six she would be well black in the face. The eldest was making vain attempts to disguise the painfully evident fact that she had settled down to the old-maid stage.

Old Williams was a thing apart from Ballytown. His clothes came from London, there being no tailor in Ballytown who could, he considered, do justice to his curves. The only connecting link he appeared to have with Ballytown was that—alas, that we have to say it—even he sometimes "broke out." The gilt was all off the gingerbread then, for, though his "bursts" did not last very long, they were very abandoned while they did last, and all visitors had to be warned off from Auburn House, which was the name that the eldest Miss Williams had painted on No. 15 Patrick Street. The worst of old Williams was that there was no knowing when he might break out, for, though to say the truth, he often kept an

unbroken record of high respectability for two years at a stretch, there was always a danger. The danger hung over the Misses Williams at all times, and each of them was haunted by the dread, though no one of them mentioned her fears to the other, that on the very eve of the "At Home"—ugh! It was too dreadful to contemplate.

The tea-table was laid in dainty style when Mrs. Tierney arrived. Even Mrs. Tierney, when gossiping at other houses, was known to admit that the Williams gave quite dainty teas, and sometimes she ejaculated the word dainty, as it were, in italics. The cups and saucers were mere toys compared with those usually in vogue at Ballytown highly respectable tea-tables; a few thin slices of currant cake, two buttered scones cut up to make four pieces, a little dab of jam in a silver dish, a little dab of marmalade in ditto, and a profusion of big daisies and ferns made up a picture, the prettiness of which would inevitably appeal to any one with a highly respectable spirit and a full stomach.

The Misses Williams were on the hill-tops of high respectability; in the plain below, tea was yet a meal in Ballytown. Indeed it was Mrs. Tierney's principal meal, except on Sundays; and so, even though she did teach music, French, and deportment, she could never get over a certain vulgar and plebeian prejudice against the Misses Williams' crockery ware,

their little thimblefuls of tea, their few ounces of jam and marmalade, their two buttered scones, and their profusion of wild daisies and ferns. Of course, it was "the thing," and Mrs. Tierney, like the Misses Williams, was on the hill-top, looking for the latest from the East in gentility.

If Patrick O'Kelly, in his blunt way, said to her, "Well, ma'am, I'd engage you wouldn't lave much out of a pound of steak, even afther doin' away wud all that lot—daisies, ferns an' all"—if Patrick said that, Mrs. Tierney would become embarrassed—at being in the presence of one who was reading her innermost thoughts—thoughts so very much innermost that, though she might suspect their presence, she would not admit them to herself.

"Won't you try some jam?" asked the youngest Miss Williams, sweetly.

"*Do* help yourself to cake," urged the second Miss Williams.

"I can recommend the marmalade," said the eldest Miss Williams; "it was made in Scotland."

Mrs. Tierney declined all these pressing requests, bowing graciously each time, and she contented herself with half of one of the buttered scones.

Mrs. Tierney was pretending to sip her tea—pretending we say, for, from experience, she knew that she could not, without appearing forward, expect a second cup, and so it was necessary to keep the

one cup in action for the quarter of an hour during which the tea proceeded.

"Mrs. Tierney," said the eldest Miss Williams, "you must remember that we have secured the acceptance of Lieutenant Smith, of the Wapping Fusiliers, to our forthcoming 'At Home,' so that you will readily understand we must be more circumspect than ever as to whom we invite."

"You were always most circumspect, Miss Williams," replied Mrs. Tierney, feigning to take a bite of the half scone. "After all, persons who are living on their means have reason to hold up their heads, particularly in those days when mere tradespeople are very forward. But you might ask Miss Flanagan; she is a highly cultured young person and writes poetry."

"Flanagan, Flanagan," echoed the second Miss Williams, "I think I have heard that name before."

"Is not," asked the eldest Miss Williams, "is not she belonging to those people who keep a—a—public-house?"

"They certainly have a *grocery*," admitted Mrs. Tierney, "but they do largely in the wholesale."

"Ah, well, I do not think we could reasonably ask Lieutenant Smith, of the Wappings, to meet even the daughter of a wholesale—*grocer*," saying which the youngest Miss Williams turned a semi-disdainful eye on Mrs. Tierney.

Mrs. Tierney instinctively felt that the Wapping Fusiliers had radically altered the social situation. She dropped the publicans as no class, although she was sincerely anxious to procure an invitation for Miss Roche, who was of a family of retired grocers who were thinking of leaving Ballytown, and residing henceforward amongst the *elite* at Killiney on Dublin Bay.

"Mr. and Mrs. Egan?" suggested Mrs. Tierney. "Mr. Egan is now a solicitor."

"Is he?" languidly asked the youngest Miss Williams.

"I thought he was only a—only a solicitor's clerk," remarked the second Miss Williams.

"That is a thing of the past," said Mrs. Tierney. "He has now a profession —he is a real solicitor."

"Ah-h," yawned the eldest Miss Williams.

"Oh-h," ejaculated the second Miss Williams.

"Perhaps, we might put them on the reserve list," said the youngest Miss Williams.

"Mr. Graves?" suggested Mrs. Tierney. The three declared almost simultaneously that Mr. Graves had been already invited.

Mr. Graves was an imported clerk in a local bank, and was a Protestant.

"Mr. and Mrs. Wooley," went on Mrs. Tierney; "any chance of them?"

"I think not," said the eldest Miss Williams, sedately, and the other two coloured.

For, though old Williams did live on his means, yet he and his family were Papists, and Mr. Wooley was a wealthy Protestant draper—who had come originally from England as a boy in the capacity of junior shop assistant—he resided now some two miles out in the country, and kept his own carriage. Even the Misses Williams sank back abashed at the daring proposal of Mrs. Tierney. It was distinction enough, surely, that five Protestant bank clerks should accept invitations to their "At Home" without their aspiring to a Protestant draper who lived in the county, kept his own carriage, and whose wife was on visiting terms with his lordship the Protestant bishop's lady.

By six o'clock a satisfactory list of unimpeachable respectability having been made out, Mrs. Tierney left.

Five minutes afterwards the Misses Williams' maid servant knocked at the door, opened it, and put in her head.

"Will ye have ye're rale tay now, if ye plase?" she asked.

The eldest Miss Williams told the maid servant to lay the tea table—the breakfast cups—in the parlour, and that they would be down in a few minutes.

The dabs of jam and of marmalade and the remains of the currant cake were carefully stowed away under lock and key, and the Misses Williams

proceeded to the parlour where each drank three breakfast cups of weak tea and left the remains of a two-pound loaf in crumbs after them on the table.

All highly respectable Ballytown was alive with gossip concerning the "At Home" of the Misses Williams that, alas, never came off. For the worst had happened. Old Williams had taken a sort of pseudo-patriotic turn, and as an immediate consequence he read a few of Lever's novels. He felt that he ought, in a mild way, be a harum-scarum sort of fellow. The microbe of alcohol, if there be such a thing, may have been at work in his system, for all we know. After all, his maternal grandfather was an O'Malley, argued old Williams to himself. Lever fascinated him. He got outside his usual prim, starchy conduct, and looked at his past life objectively, as it were, and suffering as he was from the influence of Lever's novels, if not from the alcoholic microbe, he felt at least dissatisfied with himself. Was he not in part, at least, a humbug? What did he know of science, even though he lectured at the Archæological and Scientific Society of Ballytown? If he had acted like some of Lever's Irishmen during the past five years instead of poring over books he did not understand, and delivering lectures that no one was any the better of, would not his life have been fuller? Certainly it would have been jollier.

Flanagans! He, like the second Miss Williams, thought he had heard that name before. There was a private bar there in which tobacco—and he had for years been a smoker—might be purchased. He could buy an ounce of Royal British tobacco—for though labouring under the influence of Lever's novels the term, or as he might call it the "catch cry," Irish Industry, was utterly foreign, indeed vulgar to his consciousness. He could buy some tobacco and listen to the conversation going on in the Select Bar.

Old Williams passed by Flanagan's three times with speculations of this kind floating in his already intoxicated brain. The fourth time he succumbed. Men are only human after all, said old Williams to himself, as he crossed the threshold of Flanagan's bar.

One Jagge, a Protestant veterinary surgeon, happened to be drinking a whiskey and soda in the select bar at the time. Jagge was, at least, a professional man, and therefore not, according to Ballytown social philosophy, so very far below a man like old Williams, who was living on his means. An exchange of mere formal salutes was the only intercourse that old Williams had previously had with Jagge, the vet.

Labouring under the influence of some of Lever's novels, and mayhap of the alcoholic microbe, if there

be such a thing, old Williams condescended to become genial.

"Cold day," said Jagge.

"Bitter," said old Williams, shaking himself and rubbing his hands, as he asked the bar-maid for an ounce of Royal British tobacco.

"The price of horseflesh shows a downward tendency," said old Williams, as he wiped his eye-glasses with his silk handkerchief.

To make a long story short, one word borrowed another, as they say, until Jagge remarked: —

"Won't you join me in a whiskey and soda?"

Old Williams was in the receptive state for alcohol.

"I never touch it," said he undecidedly.

"Humbug," said Jagge, cavalierly, "one glass won't do you any harm."

"Perhaps, it wouldn't," retorted old Williams, "but did you ever hear it said that one was enough, two was too much, and three was not half enough."

The bar-maid led off the laugh. Jagge and old Williams in due course joined in.

"Bedelia," said Jagge, "bring us two glasses of special and a soda."

The intelligent reader can guess the rest. Truly three was not half enough for old Williams, and Auburn Villa that night was a scene of strife and woe.

"Well, we may bid good-bye to the 'At Home,'" said the eldest Miss Williams.

"The old wretch, what a time he should break out," muttered the second Miss Williams.

"How will we break the disappointment to Lieutenant Smith, of the Wappings," ejaculated the youngest Miss Williams.

It so happened that the eldest Miss Williams had a slight cold which precipitately prostrated her. The next day a doctor called—Mrs. Tierney had the best authority for stating that two were in attendance—and notes were sent out postponing the "At Home" indefinitely.

A wave of ill-suppressed satisfaction spread throughout the major part of highly respectable Ballytown, and Mrs. Mangan said, "Serve them right, with their noses in the air."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH AMONGST OTHER MATTERS A PLAY IS PERFORMED, AND MASTER PETER RUNS AWAY FROM HOME.

But we must return to the boys. The Literary Society had not been in existence two months, when it was decided to venture upon a dramatic entertainment. A couple of meetings were occupied almost completely by spirited, and sometimes hot, discussions as to which play the new development should commence with.

At the break up of the second meeting the matter was still undecided, though it had been narrowed down to a choice between Richard III. and the "Shaughraun." Before the society met again the question was set finally at rest by Peter, who announced that he had determined to write an original play himself.

The membership of the society had been by this time swelled by the addition of one. The only objection to the new member, whose name was John Francis Aloysius Healy, was that he was sent regularly every evening by his mother to roll the family perambulator, of which his baby brother,

with quite a vermilion tip to his little nose, was the sole occupant. Tom never got over his prejudice against John Francis Aloysius on this account, and we must set it down against him that the perambulator and the baby-brother were always thrown in the face of John Francis Aloysius when the pair had high words—a state of affairs which not unfrequently happened.

When the rehearsals of Peter's original play commenced there was a new grievance against John Francis Aloysius. He invariably said "He know" instead of "He knows" and "mesef" for "meself," which in its turn was the local highly respectable way of saying "myself." These mistakes grated very much upon the nerves of the members of the Literary Society; and were it not that there were six characters in the original drama, and that John Francis Aloysius was a spirited boy who, if corrected, or otherwise rubbed the wrong way, would have probably told the rest "to play their old play an' be hanged to 'em," he would probably have been informed of his error. As it was a conspiracy of silence was observed, although Bob McCarthy lost no opportunity of echoing "mesef" and "he know" every time they were uttered by the new member.

It does not enter into the scope of this original work to dwell in detail upon the preparation or upon the acting of the play. There was one unrehearsed

scene, however, which we may note. In the middle of the second act when every nerve was painfully strained with expectation as to whether the two English red-coats would shoot the rapparee, or whether one rapparee would succeed in killing the red-coats, the silence was broken by old Mr. McCarthy, Bob's father, who sat by the side of his friend, Patrick O'Kelly.

"Ah, ye young blaa'guard, if I could lay hould o' ye! Take off me top boots at once. Do you hear me?"

This incident completely upset matters, and Peter, who was one of the red-coats, raged with vexation, and, turning to Bob McCarthy, said: —

"We couldn't have betther luck making the like of you a rappareee. Go on wud your part and don't mind your ould father, bad 'cess to him."

"What's that I heard you sayin'?" shouted Patrick O'Kelly. "You're runnin' wud yerself, me boyo."

It was evident, however, that the sympathy of the audience was overwhelmingly with Peter and against gruff old Mr. McCarthy, and so the latter gentleman discreetly endeavoured to get out of his embarrassment by remarking: —

"Well, all right; don't mind me boots now and let ye get on with the play."

Tom, who was in the wings, where he had been

filling the part of prompter, here interposed, and the surly expression on his mouth reflected his temper.

"No, I wouldn't, just to spite him," said he. "We can do our play widout his mangey boots. Give 'em to him and much good they may do him."

Tom thereupon pulled the string, and the drop scene, which was a large table cover, came down. When it rose again the play was continued, and Bob McCarthy, as Feeney the Rapparee, appeared on the stage in his own boots.

There were some subsequent interruptions of the performance, but they did not seriously interfere with the progress of the play, which concluded amid the applause of the audience. The audience consisted of the relatives of the various actors and some of their maid servants. The actors were called before the curtain at the conclusion of the play; and Patrick O'Kelly, who, to give him his due, was a man of generous impulses, took a pound note out of his pocket and threw it on the stage, saying—"Here; let ye have a feast for yourselves out o' that."

"Your ould father was too mane to give anything," said Tom, tauntingly, to Bob McCarthy, when the audience had cleared off, and the actors were busy washing the paint off their faces and tidying up the place.

Shortly after this time both Kitty and Tom fell

in love. No one ever knew of the passion that raged in Tom's heart, for he was one of those small boys who admired at a distance and suffered in silence; the only symptoms that he disclosed to his relations, but which none of them had the insight to diagnose properly, was that he suddenly refused—even to the extent of throwing himself on the ground and kicking his legs—to wear his much patched knickerbockers any more.

It was different with Kitty. Everyone but Mrs. O'Kelly and Patrick knew that she was thinking of nothing for the past two months but William Reginald de la Hunt, whose father's name was plain John Delahunty. William wore his gloves on a week-day and indulged in dreams of becoming a "lawyah," and having two thousand a "ye-aw."

Kitty asked Tom to go out walking with her every evening now, and, as Tom ran the chance of being seen by his secretly beloved in his best suit and silver-topped cane which he was allowed to carry when walking with his sister, he was not unwilling; though he usually grumbled, because he knew that a grumble was equal to a package of cigarettes.

Should the pair meet with William de la Hunt, Tom dropped behind. The conversational powers of Kitty's gallant were very limited, for he had long since told her his little stock of jokes, and Tom, though himself violently in love, often turned over

and over in his mind, as he mutely followed the almost mute couple, whether or not it was waste of time to be walking with a girl.

It so happened at this time that Peter, who had the greatest contempt for William Reginald de la Hunt, picked a quarrel with him, and bled his nose for him. Whether or not the young gentleman thought that Kitty had anything to do with the fomenting of the row we will not stop to inquire, but Reginald cut Kitty dead the next day, and Kitty vented all her spleen on Peter.

Peter was now eighteen years of age, and had ambitions for literary fame. He wrote and read day after day, and Kitty taunted him with being a "big mosey, earning nothing and living on his people, while James Martin had got into a bank, and Tom Scanlan had seven and sixpence a week in the railway booking office."

In desperation Peter consented to study for the Civil Service, though he had made up his mind that he would never work under the government, for he was a conscientious rebel. Under the pretence of studying for the Civil Service, Peter had a new lease of term for reading all about the French Revolution, a portion of history which had a keen attraction for him at this time. In the evening he would walk Patrick Street with Jamesy Doyle, discussing the characters of Danton, Robespierre and the rest, and

comparing them with Wolfe Tone and John Mitchell.

Things went on like this until Peter fell out with Mr. Maloney, and informed that genteel gentleman and master tailor, that if Ireland was full of men like him, there would be no one in it but old women.

Three days afterwards Peter was talking to Jenny Casey and two other girls, one of whom was a daughter of a small landlord who had pretentions to be a County man. Peter's mind was all of a flame in consequence of his new acquaintance, for though a Land Leaguer, a Revolutionist, and a believer in equality, he looked up socially to landlords. Every art that he was master of was brought into play, and he lit and threw away three cigarettes in succession in order to show his generosity, and to impress his lady friend with a sense of his importance. For Peter, like all boys, however honest and however revolutionary, was a little snob. Just as he had called over an old beggarwoman, so that by giving her a penny he might show off two sovereigns and fifteen shillings which his mother had given him to pay a bill, Mrs. Maloney's rotund figure hove in sight, and as she saw Peter her face darkened, as the recent reflection on her husband came back to her memory.

"Don't mind that good-for-nothing boy, any of ye," said Mrs. Moloney. "For he never earned a

penny in his life, and there's no use ye're going after him, for he is living on his mother."

That night Peter was very moody and refused to answer Kitty back when she taunted him with being an idle fellow. The next morning when Tom woke Peter's bed was empty, and an envelope addressed to Mrs. O'Kelly was fastened to the bed-post. The envelope contained a letter setting out how he could not stand the jeers and taunts he was subjected to any longer, and that he had gone, never, never to return.

Had Peter contemplated for a moment the effect which his flight would have had upon his mother he would have hesitated; but a young man of eighteen, smarting under what he considreed cruel taunts, thinks of little but his wounded vanity.

Mrs. O'Kelly was inconsolable. Where had he gone? How would the poor boy get anything to eat to-morrow? Kitty was also in quite a state of collapse at the unexpected result of her spleen towards Peter, and only recovered to something like her normal self when she was able to tell her mother that the two pounds fifteen shillings which Peter had received to pay a bill had not been paid over, and that he had his own gold watch, which was reputed to have cost ten pounds seven years ago.

All that Mrs. O'Kelly said when she heard of this was: —

"My poor boy, that won't last him very long."

And she dried her eyes and consented to look calmly at the future. Kitty predicted that it might turn out the very best thing that Peter could have done, and Mrs. Moloney set her face sternly against Mrs. O'Kelly's proposal that she or some one else should proceed to Dublin in search of the missing boy.

The moment that the train had got one mile outside Ballytown, on the way to Dublin, Peter forgot all about his grievances and his wounded heart. Was not Dublin life before him and over two pounds and a gold watch in his pocket. All thought of Ballytown had vanished from his mind when he stepped out of the train at Dublin and looked up and down the platform with quite a bored air, a cigarette between his lips, pretending that he was looking for his portmanteau. Of course, poor Peter had no luggage, except what was on his back, but he, like many other prominent Irish gentlemen of eighteen, thought that the people of Dublin had nothing better to do but look at him.

"Dash it," said he, quite audibly, "I am always losing my portmanteau."

And, then casting half a cigarette from him in quite the grand manner, he lifted his stick and ejaculated: —

"Car."

He gave instructions to be driven to the hotel on the

quays where the wedding party had stayed some years before, and chatted condescendingly to the jarvey on the state of the country as he was whirled along, his legs crossed and his hat on the side of his head.

Peter shook hands familiarly with John the waiter, who showed him to the smoking-room. When would dinner be ready? In an hour.

"Dash it," said Peter, "I wanted to be out at Ballsbridge by that time. However, it can't be helped. You might bring me a good cigar."

And Peter a few minutes afterwards was lolling behind a daily paper, his feet resting on the chair before him and a volume of smoke coming from his mouth.

Peter went to the theatre that night—of course, he drove there on a car. Every one about the hotel, whom he could tip, he tipped, and generally acted up to the character of a gallant and generous young Irish gentleman.

Dreams are true while they last. After three days of this crowded and glorious life, Peter thought he had better ask for his bill, as the two pounds fifteen shillings were nearly gone. His bill, which included a number of cigars and brandies and whiskeys to which he had treated various people, came to £2 1s. 8d. This was a blow to Peter, for he only got £2 15s. on the gold watch.

Young gentlemen of Peter's type, when they get into straits, like to play with the idea of dying game. Dying game strikes the imagination in all its heroic glamour while you feel that you still have a lease of life. Peter tipped the waiter and ordered a car for Kingsbridge, from whence, he gave out, he was "just running down" to Kildare to look at a horse.

After paying the jarvey he walked into the station and sat down on a basket where he counted his money. It totalled up to 9s. 8d., and he tried to shut his mind against that question, which in one form or another is constantly intruding itself upon us—What next? Peter would go to his doom in glamour, that was about the most definite answer that he vouchsafed to give. He paraded Grafton Street that evening, now and again smoking a cigarette. The day before—long ago it looked, in the days of dreamland—he had walked that same pavement with a sixpenny cigar in his mouth, dropping in here for a cup of coffee and there for lemonade and cakes. When night fell, he drifted about the mean quarters near the Park Gate, and engaged a bed for a shilling. He laid himself out to sleep in peace, for he had made up his mind to look for employment on the morrow.

On the morrow he could not get away from the

fact that by living on bread and tea he had sufficient to hold out for seven days, and so, as there was no hurry, he would postpone looking for employment until the following day.

He went to the railway terminus before the train was due from Ballytown, and posted himelf in a corner where he could see, but not be seen. He was nursing the hope that some one would come in search for him. His mind went back to Ballytown, and his eyes moistened as he thought of his mother. But no search party came from Ballytown, and he went over to the Park and lay down. To-morrow he would look for employment.

He rose early, and his resolution vacillated to and fro. But eventually he started out, trying to keep his mind from dwelling on what he had determined to do. He would go to the "Freeman's Journal" Office, and offer himself as a leader writer on home and foreign affairs, or as a dramatic critic, and if these failed he would even consent to go on as an ordinary reporter. He turned Prince's Street with unabated resolve. But the dingy look of the office, the boys running up and down, a grizzly-looking old man behind the counter whom he took to be the editor, and the yells of the newsboys—all these chilled his resolve, and he collapsed. As he turned away daunted from the office, he could have addressed any of the urchins selling the ha'penny papers as "Sir."

No search party came from Ballytown that day either; and when he had paid his night's lodging he would have 3s. 7d. left.

The next morning brute facts were developing cruelly through the glamour. He could enlist—join the cohorts of his country's enemies—he who scornfully refused to try for civil employment from the hated government. Anyway, if he enlisted he would get bread and be saved the humiliation of retreating back, broken and humiliated, to Ballytown again. He went to Wellington Barracks and looked in through the railings. If it were only a French Army, or a German, or a Zulu Army, anything but the English! Could anything go beyond the humiliation of joining the red-coats? Would not death in a ditch from starvation be better?

Something had to be done, so he hurried to the Terminus and bought a ticket as far as 3s. 4d. would take him, and that was fifteen miles from Ballytown. But into that place he was desperately resolved he would never enter. Something might happen on the way; he might meet a stranger who wanted a clever, well-read secretary. And at the worst there were bridges over which he could throw himself; secluded ditches in which he could die lingeringly of starvation.

In the Ballytown household Mrs. O'Kelly was becoming restive. The optimism of Kitty and the

severe moralising of Mrs. Moloney were becoming less and less bearable to her, and her imagination was haunted by pictures of the sufferings of her boy. She had forbidden Kitty to speak any more to her on the subject, and declared before Mrs. Moloney's face that her conduct was heartless and inhuman, that she had rather break stones on the road than suffer another day of suspense and anguish, and that, if she had to walk all the way, the morning would see her, in the name of God, starting for Dublin to look for her boy.

Opposition fell back abashed before this outburst of a mother's resolution; and even Mrs. Moloney, accepting the inevitable, fell to discussing the details of the search.

Suddenly a "beggar's knock"—which in Ballytown signified one thud on the knocker—was heard, and, as it was nine o'clock at night, no one noticed it. After a while the single knock was repeated and again repeated.

"Well, then," said the old maid-servant to herself in the kitchen, "it's the divil's impudence them beggars have. They think we have nothin' to do only answer their knocks for them. Whist—there she is again."

The old maid-servant was having her evening's sit down, and was in no humour for being disturbed.

"Well," said she, "if I had a house full o' lavins'

I wouldn't give her as much as a scrap now for her impudence. It is a wipe of a stick that some of them would want."

There was yet another knock and the old woman rubbed her eyes and got up, with her under-lip hanging in a most unamiable way.

When the sight of one eye shot through the inch and a half of open door, it was not a beggar that it revealed, but Peter scared and weary looking. The servant gave a start, and hastening down the hall she opened the parlour door.

"It's Masther Pether, ma'am," she said.

And here we will save the feelings of the reader by ringing down the curtain on the scene that ensued.

Three months afterwards one of Peter's uncles on the mother's side, who was well off in the United States, agreed to take him, and as we will not want that erring and erratic boy in our story henceforth, we may say that he is now a prosperous American citizen, member of the one of the State congresses, looks back at his countrymen as a grown man contemplates children, "guesses," and "calculates," and "bets," and he shrugged his shoulders when he was asked to interest himself in the Irish race at home and abroad Convention.

Peter was brought up a rebellious West-Briton; he is now content to be an American, and is lost to his country for ever.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE "EXTREME" PARTY MAKE A MOVE, AND THE READER SEES HOW THE TAIL CAN WAG THE HEAD.

Two days before the date appointed for the demonstration, Mr. Patrick O'Reilly, the secretary to the committee, was summoned hastily by message-boy to the Patriotic and Literary Club, where he found Corcoran and Uncle Michael with long faces, looking very solemn.

O'Reilly was at once instructed to scour the town for five other members of the committee, as a matter of the greatest urgency had suddenly arisen which demanded immediate attention.

The secretary on his way to the house of the committeeman who lived nearest, was all at once struck by a happy thought, which caused him to turn sharply to the right, and dash up a little alley from about the middle of which a dilapidated door led to the yard, and from thence to the back parlour, of James Meehan's wholesale and retail wine and spirit stores—a place which, in consequence of its secluded approach, was much resorted to by the gentlemen of Ballytown during the daytime. In through the

doorway of the back parlour the secretary craned his neck, and bagged four of the committeemen at one haul. Whilst the energetic secretary (who was good enough to be sent upon errands, but not up to the mark when a showy office like the reading of letters of apology was to be filled) was on his way in quest of the remaining committeeman, the four already mentioned arrived at the club.

In a short time they, too, wore long faces and looked blankly at one another. The fact of the matter was that Mr. Stephen Mooney, a tailor and a man of "extreme" views, had written a letter to the Demonstration Committee.

Before we divulge the nature of the contents of this remarkable letter, we shall briefly introduce the reader to Mr. Stephen Mooney, and to his right-hand man. Stephen was reputed to be one of the principal men of a local secret society, the object of which was to double-up the British Empire on the first favourable opportunity. And, though Stephen never explicitly denied the accusation, we would advise the reader not to stick his faith too tightly to the truth of the rumour. So much cheap honour is obtained out of being sent to jail for "the cause" in this curious country, that it is naturally the aim of many a young man's ambition; and the fact of being looked upon as being one of a secret conspiracy invests one with so much importance, that it is no

wonder that many an innocent and harmless person, who couldn't put a bullet into the Rotunda from the other side of the street, should "keep saying nothing" when the charge is made against him. Many a man has jumped from well-earned obscurity into jail, and from jail into Parliament, in the course of a few months; and the "extreme" man is ever a power, if not a prophet, on his native heath.

Stephen had a party. There were only five of them within the knowledge of the public, but one great advantage of being a leader of a secret conspiracy is that you need never embarrass yourself by displaying the extent of your backing, but you can dangle the unknown before the credulity of your neighbours. Nay, Stephen protested publicly and often that the people had degenerated, and were becoming Constitutionalists, but the more he protested —such was the curious manner in which he did it— the bigger he and his loomed in the eyes of the Ballytown public. For no one could know better than a large number of the astute and intelligent Ballytown public that Stephen's protests were nothing but a deep and clever ruse to throw dust in the eyes of the British Empire.

We will guarantee this much to the reader— Stephen thought that he had a party, and believed firmly that he was a standing menace to the integrity of the Empire. If you asked Stephen where were

the guns, ammunition, stores and such trifles to come from when the moment for striking the blow arrived, he would survey you with a Napoleonic look, as if he were reading your innermost thoughts; and then what we can only describe as a cryptic smile would play upon his countenance. Such was the only answer he would vouchsafe to the asker of vulgar questions. Stephen's right-hand man and confidant was Mr. Peter Connell, merchant's clerk, a shabby-genteel individual who had a partiality for fine language, and who, disclaiming the mental fare which "The Sunburst of Ireland Magazine" and the stereo-page of the "Ballytown Echo" offered him, spent such leisure as he gave to reading in the perusal of "works." The intelligent reader, we make no doubt, will understand "works" as distinct from mere books, without further explanation.

"I will never be happy, nor neither will I ever remain still, until the harp without the crown—without the crown, mind you—flaps joyfully in the breeze over every bloomin' police barracks in the counthry."

Such was one of Mr. Peter Connell's frequent remarks.

Now, Mr. Peter had a record. He had taken part in a real insurrection, and in so far he had something to stand on when he expounded his views on military tactics to the other five. He was a convinced physical force man.

"Yea, sir, I may not live to see the day, but the day will come to this old Isle of destiny when every river and valley and mountain will echo with rifle shots, and the wild cries of victory of a rebel army."

Needless to say, no plain man would think of entering into an argument with Mr. Peter. Some plain men are sensible and some are not; the former class of plain man laughed at Mr. Peter, but the latter were "knocked all of a heap" by his language.

It would be utterly unjust to call Mr. Peter a fraud; his opinions hindered his material advancement, and he had more than once risked all that men hold dear for what he considered the cause of his country. About thirty years ago on one bitter sleety night, when nineteen-year-old blood was coursing through his veins, he went out to an appointed meeting place, and met a handful of comrades. One of them unfurled a green flag, and a feeling of ecstacy ran through Connell's soul that he had never before and never since experienced. Throwing an old muzzle-loader over his shoulder, and a parcel of sandwiches across his back, he went down on his bare knees in the snow and slush, and uttered a few short prayers to Heaven; then, into the ranks of his few comrades.

"Forward to the hills, boys," said he, "death or liberty, and old Ireland forever."

He came back after what sufferings and privations

and heart-burnings it is none of our purpose now to touch upon. On that night when the unfurling of the green flag kindled all his soul, and he counted his life as nothing when he thought of his country, even we, who look upon his project as hopeless, involuntarily salute him; to-night, however, as we observe him sitting in the back parlour of Mr. Stephen Mooney's shop, saluting him does not enter our thoughts, for we see him smoking a long clay pipe, arguing with great seriousness in a company of six, on the decay of the physical force sentiment of the country.

"To my mind, at all events, it seems clear that the time has come—if it has not already arrived—when, at all events, some pressure should be put on High Faluter, to make him speak out sthrongly."

The upshot of all the talking which took place was that Mr. Peter drafted the letter which Mr. Stephen signed. And this was the letter which caused so much commotion to the Demonstration Committee. To that Committee we will now return.

"I think," said Corcoran, "I had betther read the letther a third time, so that there may be no misundherstandin' it. Here it is:—

"Ballytown.

"To the Demonstration Committee.

"Dear Sirs—I am directed on behalf of many well-known, tried and trusted men—men who, in the

dark and evil times, have not hesitated to do and dare for the great and noble and never-to-be-relinquished cause of our native sireland—to communicate their view to you on the subject of the approaching visit to our ancient and historic town of High Faluter, Esquire, M.P.

"I and my friends—whom, for reasons to men like yourselves, who know the nefarious system of Government under which we groan will be obvious, I deem better not to mention categorically by name—have, after careful and long consideration come to the unanimous conclusion that a crisis has come to a head in the history of our common and beloved country—that country which has already like a noble ship weathered many a tempestuous gale, and has risen to life over and over again, after being left a corpse on the dissecting table for the sport of contending factions.

"We have come to the conclusion that the cause for which Theobald Wolfe Tone—that greatest and noblest Irishman who ever breathed the breath of this terrestrial life—worked, for which Emmet—that greatest martyr that ever shed his youthful blood for his country—died upon the scaffold. The cause of the complete and absolute independence of our ancient country is being lost sight of and a mean, parochial, bread and butter, not to say, pusillanimous conception of nationality is gradually, we

grieve to say, taking the place of that nobler and more complete ideal, which would never let its sword rust so long as one link of slavery clanked on the garb of our mother Erin, nor relax its voice of protest while even one speck of slavery tarnished the dazzling brilliancy of the sun of Irish freedom.

"It, therefore, appears to us that we would be lacking in our duty, and would be proving ourselves unworthy of the sacred trust handed down to us by the heroic soldiers of Irish liberty on many a hard-fought battlefield, and by her martyrs on many a blood-bedewed scaffold, if we did not raise our voice at this momentous juncture in our beloved country's history, and attempt by our protest to stay—while yet there is time—the ebb of the true spirit of Irish nationality, which is fast flowing away from the hills and plains and valleys of our glorious and immortal country. We have, therefore, resolved to leave no stone unturned to break the power of High Faluter and his followers, and make their demonstration a bye-word and reproach to the whole civilised world, unless he speaks out in clear tones, and with no uncertain voice, and makes it perfectly plain that no man dare put a limit to the march of Irish liberty, and unless he acknowledges publicly and openly that there are yet—ah, yes, even yet—brave men who will accept no settlement as final that will still insult the green flag with the figure of the

Crown—the emblem of that power which has tyrannised in every land, and whose every record is bathed in the tears of unoffending widows and orphans. This old land of ours was never made to be the home of slaves. We will never forget that it is the Isle of Destiny—ah, no; let us perish a thousand times rather than sink so low as that.

"I now conclude and we will await the speech of High Faluter and the future attitude of his followers until we decide upon prompt and no uncertain action.

"I remain, Dear Sirs,
"Yours faithfully,
"STEPHEN MOONEY.
"God Save Ireland."

Another spell of silence followed the re-reading of this letter; several of the members of the Committee scratched their heads, and one got up and deliberately spat in the fire.

"Who the hell is Mooney, that he should dictate to us?" asked Uncle Michael. "What I'd do is to tear up his letther, an' be hanged to him."

"Well, before we do anything more let us call Johnny, an' have dhrinks," said Corcoran, "for I look upon this as a very sairious matther."

"Mooney himself never penned that letther," remarked Uncle Michael.

"The divil an ever," agreed Corcoran. "Every line of it is Pether Connell's. Faith, the chap, though he is only a clerk, has an uncommon command of fine language. If he put his mind to it, I believe he could make nearly as great a speech as High Faluter himself."

"The divil a doubt of it," remarked another member of the committee, "an' that's the raison it's so dangerous to have him against ye; for he can come on top o' ye wud a column of a letther in the paper as aisy as he'd write a bill."

"Ye think a great deal too much of that self-same Connell and of Mooney, too," said Uncle Michael. "The people are gettin' too sensible now for the like o' them. As ye know, I was a Fenian meself five-and-twenty years ago, but times are changed now, an' sure no wan minds what the like o' them say at all."

"I am not so sure o' that; an' you can't tell what influence them chaps have, even though they're only tailors an' that. We aren't a bit too strong, that we can afford to be runnin' unraisonably in the face of anywan. The Twaddleites cause is none too strong, and that divil who leads the Tweedleites—I believe he is in the pay o' the Castle—will be speakin' at a factionist demonstration next month."

"I wouldn't put it past them but they'd hire a few blaa'guards to spile our meetin'," suggested another.

"Yerrah, they wouldn't pay the toss up of a brass farthin' to break all the meetin's that ever was in id," said Uncle Michael.

"There's no wan in this room," retorted Corcoran, "who thinks less of Steve Mooney than meself. I don't believe that between the whole damn lot o' them—however many or few o' them may be in id—that they have as much even as wan rifle. But at the same time ye know very well what would happen if they were to give the word, sayin' that we were false to the memory of Thaibald Wolfe Tone. The only way to shut these chaps up is to shout just as loud as themselves; an' what the hell harm is it when it desaives nobody?"

"We all know very well that there's something in what you say," said Uncle Michael; "but at the same time I don't like to be dhruv this way and that way at the beck of a pa'cel of rantin' tailors."

"You've a great dale more talk than undherstandin' in ye," replied Corcoran, sharply, "for ye ought to know that it isn't the tailors that are waggin' us, but the circumstances. If I meself—or you, for the matther o' that—were to go out an' accuse our party of fallin' off in their heredethery hathred o' the English race, the party would have to shout to our tune or take the consequences. For, look here—an' I have pondhered many an' many a

time over what I'm goin' to say now—the whole principle, the A B C, in fact, of the cause of Irish Nationality as I know it, is—to hell wud the English. For, if ye'll think of it—if it isn't that, then what the hell is it? Answer me that?"

This incisive speech appeared to give pause to the committee, and even Uncle Michael took time before he could recover.

"That's a bit too deep for me," said he at last. "But whatever the principle is, shoutin' like a pa'cel of boys about fightin' an' batin' England when the whole o' Ballytown would run before a squad o' Bobbies is a lot o' damn rot, an' the sooner we give it up the betther."

Corcoran and Uncle Michael, neither of whom the intelligent reader will have perceived were speaking with any striking illumination upon their subject, having left the consideration of Stephen Mooney's letter, and plunged into the question of the principle of Irish Nationality, had gone beyond their depth. They surveyed one another across the table, and each endeavoured to appear as little puzzled as possible. They were not accustomed to speculations of that kind, and, indeed, most of their opinions upon public questions were not opinions at all, but adopted catch-words and party cries.

Mr. Denny Cronin, who had up to this only listened attentively to what had been said, now took a

pinch of snuff, a fact which greatly relieved Corcoran and Uncle Michael, for they knew well that such an action was the precursor of a few remarks.

"I have listened," said Mr. Cronin, "very attentively to all that has been said on both sides of this most intherestin' an' momentuous matther, an' I must say there's a dale of raison in all the remarks that have been made. It appears to me that Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Michael O'Kelly are both in the right, as far as thairy goes, but afther all, I think if we wor to agree to let Mr. High Faluter know the thrue state of affairs, an' say to him that if he could get in a little bit of soft soap for Mooney and Connell it might soften the leather a bit—I think meself we would be takin' a most practical course. If he'd make a few remarks about the principles of Tone and Emmet 'twould take the back out of anything that Mooney might have to say. None of us, of course, as Mr. O'Kelly thruly says, can see any raison in talking about these things, but the people have got to be reconciled, an' if we don't do it the other side will. If ye want the youngsters to march behind the Sunburst of Erin Fife an' Dhrum Band, believe me ye must talk the height of high thraison."

Mr. Denny Cronin's advice, on the few occasions that he chose to tender it, was always listened to with the greatest respect, for Mr. Denny was a pawnbroker, and a shrewd man. Perhaps, at this point

the reader might also be informed that two of his daughters were at a convent school in France, one son was at Stonyhurst College in England, and another was an officer in the army.

"Well," said Corcoran, who owed Denny a long standing bill, "there's no wan in the whole length an' breadth of Ballytown—an' I don't hesitate to say it to his face—that I have a greater respect for than for Mr. Dennis Cronin. I have never known his judgment to be wrong yet, an' no matther what me own opinion might be I would sairously raeconsidher it if he were to take the other side. He is wan of our wealthiest men, a credit to our town an' to the Twaddleites, an' he is givin' his family the best education that can be got for money in any part of the world."

Mr. Denny Cronin's capacity for taking blarney was only equalled by his own ability for laying it on. His wealth and the foreign education that he was giving to his family were—as Corcoran well knew—the two points where his vanity was the most easily flattered. Mr. Denny could not resist the temptation to improve upon the comments of his friend.

"There are, indeed," said he, "many richer men in Ballytown than meself, though it's only raw thruth what Mr. Corcoran says—an' I think I have just raison to pride meself on it—that I have done everything I could to educate me childre an' make ladies an' gentlemen o' them."

Corcoran continued:—"There's nothin' farther from me thoughts than to flatter Misther Cronin, but I think we couldn't do betther than on this occasion lave ourselves to be led and said be his weighty advice; an' I think if we decide to do nothin' only to tell Misther High Faluter how the cat is jumping, an' give him a hint that a rub o' soft soap for Mooney, an' a taste o' sthrong talk, would aise matthers considherably, we will be actin' wisely."

This course was agreed upon after some further conversation; Mr. Denny Cronin stood a "thrate," and the committee dissolved in the best of humour with itself and the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH THE READER GETS A GLIMPSE AT A GREAT DEMONSTRATION, AND LEARNS MANY INTERESTING THINGS RELATING THERETO.

There was a great bustle and excitement, and goings to and from the Literary and Patriotic Club on the morning of the Demonstration. Mr. High Faluter, M.P., was to arrive by the train from Dublin due in Ballytown at 1.30, and lunch was ordered to be ready at 1.45 for fifteen persons at the Twaddleite Hotel. Mr. Peter Morris, the second grocer of Ballytown, who had previously crawled after the Protestant and Imperial party, and had intrigued and eaten plates of humble-pie time after time in the course of a vain attempt to get into "Society," was fawned upon in turn by several of the organisers of the Demonstration. Mr. Peter was a great acquisition to the Twaddleites, and they worked him for all that he was worth: and as he employed clerks and assistants, it was only natural that many of the Twaddleites, who could do with such occupations if they got them, bowed low to Mr. Peter Morris, laughed when he attempted to say something funny, and cheered his speeches.

Everyone knew that Mr. Peter Morris, in his public capacity, was a poor creature, but he was useful to the Twaddleites, and the Twaddleites were useful to him. And though politics and rhetoric are all very well, still a man must look after his own interests. He had sworn at the Land League, in the early days, when "Society" was the objective of his ambition. Then boycotting quickly developed, and several local orators asked the people why they continued to deal in the shop of a man who was an enemy to the sacred cause of Irish Nationality. His receipts began to dwindle, and an advertisement appearing in the "Ballytown Echo" stating that in consequence of rapidly increasing business, Mr. Wilkins-Jones required several new hands, Mr. Peter Morris was driven to take serious counsel with his own heart over his past attitude towards the patriotic aspirations of his country. A subscription of 5 guineas to the National Fund was the result, and in forwarding the cheque to the "Freeman's Journal" he wrote a letter stating that the time had come when a man could no longer remain passive, but should either throw in his lot with the enemies of his country, or side with the people in the great and noble struggle for legislative independence, and that for his part he did not, as a true-born Irishman, hesitate one moment over his choice, and that he would ever be found ready to do his humble part with voice and

purse—or even, did occasion call for it, with other weapons—for the advancement of the great cause which was entwined round the heart of every Irishman worthy of the name.

This letter and subscription proved to be a great stroke of business on the part of Mr. Peter Morris, and he looked forward—not without reason—to the time when he would be the first grocer in Ballytown. Unfortunately he had made a miscalculation when the division of forces came after the crisis, for he counted confidently upon the Twaddleites rather than the Tweedleites being the losing side. He waited for his opportunity of getting over to the majority, and when the first favourable opportunity presented itself he announced his conversion. He also announced, for he had customers in both camps, that he was too broad-minded a man not to admit that there were good men and true on both sides.

Mr. Peter Morris was very busy on the day of the Demonstration. It was he who was to receive High Faluter at the station, and he had sent off one of his men to arrange for twelve fog-signals, to be laid on the rails, by way of salute to the noble patriot who was to visit them.

Mr. Henry Law, the young solicitor, was to be secretary to the meeting; for, though Patrick O'Reilly had done all the work in connection with the organisation of it, he was only a clerk in a drapery establishment, and it would not do at all to have anyone

but a professional man reading the letters of apology.

Dr. Andrew O'Kelly had changed his opinion, and had decided not to touch the Twaddleites on this occasion. He looked out of his window, with a sneer on his lips, as the first country contingent, headed with a green banner, marched into the town. A tough, weather-beaten, kindly-looking crowd they appeared, inured alike to hardship and to hope.

"Poor dupes," said Dr. Andrew to himself, "when will you learn sense and act for yourselves, and not be wagged about by a few adventurers?"

Dr. Andrew himself would have wagged that country contingent if he saw that any personal advantage was to be got out of it; and yet, notwithstanding this, his comment and the thought which suggested it were sincere.

A number of urchins had already gathered round the platform which had been erected in the Market Square. On one side was a flag bearing the words "Ireland a Nation." A little distance removed from it were a gingerbread stall, a woman selling cockles and another crubeens; on the far side was a flag inscribed with "*Ceud mile fáilte*" (needless to say it was incorrectly spelled on the flag); underneath it a few beggars were taking up positions of vantage near the approaches to the meeting. Meanwhile a great crowd had assembled outside the station,

though scarcely so large as the crowd that assembled the day after one of the sheds was burned to the ground the previous month.

One old man asked his neighbour: —"Who is this High Faluter at all?"

"Arrah," replied the neighbour addressed, "he's a great man entirely. It is how you'd feel afther hearin' him spake, that we're the greatest people in the world only that we never get the chance. It's the devil to be listenin' to him givin' it to the Government. Yerrah, man, there's no name ye could think of that he wouldn't call them, an' not the laste bit of fear in him at all."

"Ha!" said the old man, "but 'tis little good 'twill all do, for I was at many a meetin' of Dan O'Connell's when I was a young man, but for all we never got Repale. Tell me now—have this man any money, or what is he?"

Before the old man could get an answer the first fog signal went off, and the crowd began to surge. As the train drew up in the station a yell was raised, Mr. High Faluter stepped out of his compartment, and bowed like a king in a play. Mr. Peter Morris was the first to clasp him by the hand, and when that obsequious gentleman had muttered: "Welcome to Ballytown," the lower part of his face subsided into a smug grin, and his shifty eyes glittered with petty triumph. He led Mr. High Faluter to the

carriage which, by previous arrangement, was, the moment High Faluter had stepped into it, unyoked from its pair of grey mares.

No sooner did the simple crowd notice what was being done than they, with that fatal Irish desire to please, which vitiates public thought and action in Ireland, tumbled one over the other for the coveted honour of being a beast of burden to the great man. High Faluter himself did his best to look stony and impassive, as a really great one had done on many a similar occasion. But High Faluter was neither impassive nor stony, nor was he thinking upon the fortunes of his race and country. He had not humour enough to see the ridiculous side of all the cheering and carriage-drawing. He drank in all the adulation that was proffered him, for, being a great man, he felt that he deserved it; indeed, he could have done with oceans more of it. He looked down upon his countrymen cheering wildly, they knew not why; upon others of them acting as willing beasts of burden to one of their own flesh and blood.

Is it good that men with minds and souls should, of their own choosing, make oxen and mules of themselves? Does such a tendency make for manhood and national health? They don't know High Faluter, who fancy that such thoughts ever even tapped at his mind. If the people turned themselves

inside out in order to do greater homage to High Faluter, that great statesman would address his strange audience with all the more spirit, and would tell them, with superlative emphasis, that they inhabited the Isle of Destiny, and that as sure as the sun would rise to-morrow, and that as sure as several other things of like regular occurrence would come about, the light of freedom would dawn upon the holy hills of Ireland, and the people would become, as they ought to be, prosperous, happy, contented, and free. The country would take her place amongst the nations of the earth, and several other things of a like desirable nature would also happen.

But let us say a word in favour of High Faluter, in case any of our inconsiderate readers should begin to flatter himself too much on the strength of his own virtue. High Faluter is not naturally shallow, nor is he conscious that he is insincere; even yet, let us admit, he would willingly face the scaffold or the gaol. But he has lived all his public life in an atmosphere of make-believe and *raimeis.* No one can constantly breathe such an atmosphere without becoming affected by it; and it is well to remember that even strictly honest people like you and me, who laugh at High Faluter and pity his followers—even we might likewise attempt to look like plaster kings, and act like heaven-sent leaders, if we found slaves to draw our carriages, and fools to cheer us on our way.

Whilst many common, level-headed men, who were ready to do anything reasonable for the cause of their country, but who did not take kindly to acting the donkey for High Faluter's benefit, and who had a rough, instinctive perception of the difference between sense and twaddle, looked out of their windows, the procession passed by and halted, amid a renewed burst of wild cheering at the Twaddleite Hotel.

During the space of half an hour, whilst High Faluter, Mr. Peter Morris, Corcoran and twelve others were regaling themselves, the immense crowd outside, many of whom had not had a real square meal for a month, kept up a continued demonstration of cheering and singing. High Faluter and his companions were convinced, more than ever during that half hour, that the great spirit of Irish Nationality was immortal.

There was more cheering and waving of hats, more rushing for the honour of being beasts of burden to the great statesman, when High Faluter, endeavouring to look as serious and stony as a statue, appeared at the door of the hotel, and proceeded to descend the steps with an air of great gravity.

The scene at the Market Square when the procession arrived was one of the greatest enthusiasm. A cordon of policemen, who had nothing to do for months back but play concertinas, were drawn up at

one end in battle-array: and old Biddy was using strong language as she gathered up her stock of crubeens which a bold boy had kicked over in the gutter. Carbery, the tinker, was endeavouring to sell his bundle of ashplants, and just as he was engaged in a hot argument with a customer, the sergeant of police, on the look out for something to justify his existence, gripped him by the shoulder, and told him to "Go long to hell ou' that."

Mr. Peter Morris took the chair on the platform amid a feeble shout, and, as the junior reporters say, "in a few well-chosen words," opened the proceedings.

Mr. Patrick O'Kelly proposed the first resolution, and, as he warmed to his work, James Connor came in for it hot, and Corcoran, who was next to Patrick, put his foot on the latter's toe on two occasions, when the adjectives and the abuse were becoming too strong even for a Ballytown popular audience.

However, all the speechifying was tame until the great High Faluter stepped forward to the front of the platform, one hand between the first and second button of his black frock-coat, and the other hanging by his side. For two minutes and twenty seconds by the clock, and for ten minutes by the "Ballytown Echo," the cheering lasted. Then High Faluter cleared his throat and commenced as follows: —

"Fellow-countrymen and men of historic Ballytown, standing as I do within the shadow of the

legend-laden Ballytown Mountains, where, in the grand old days of yore, the men of '98 turned on their oppressors, and sanctified the hills and valleys with their martyr blood—standing, I say, on this hallowed spot, surrounded by the good men and true of your historic county, I feel that words are inadequate to express to you the pride I feel in standing here to-day. Lord Rosewater, the British minister, playing down to the low prejudice of his unthinking followers, declares that the national sentiment of Ireland is on the wane. Men of Ireland, before the gaze of the whole civilised world the men of Ballytown have answered that foul calumny to-day (great cheers). Men of Ireland, you have come in your thousands, like your brave fathers before you when the clarion notes of national duty resound throughout the country—you have come undaunted and fearless as the great race from which you spring—you have come together to defy the British Minister, and here from this historic spot to-day we hurl back this lie of the British minister." (Great and prolonged cheering).

Proceeding he showed clearly, amongst other things, that several local reforms could not be effected until "this Government was hurled into that obloquy which its bloody and cruel conduct had earned for it."

The General Election, supposed to be not far off, was

then referred to at length, and the people were advised to select a "sound, tried, true, and uncompromising patriot, a man prepared to sacrifice all, even life itself, in the noble cause of legislative independence," as their representative in place of the weak-kneed Tweedleite that now misrepresented their historic Twaddleite town.

"Such a man you have," said High Faluter, "in Mr. Patrick O'Kelly, as sound and true and fearless an Irishman as ever trod the daisy-spangled soil of the hills and glens of Ireland. I need say nothing to you, men of Ballytown, to whom his name is a household word. You know him as well as you know the rushing river that adorns your native county. But, men of Ballytown, I must say this—if Ireland had 86 such men representing her on the floor of the British House of Commons—a place which, for my own part, nothing but the sternest dictates of patriotism would permit me to set foot in—then I say, fellow-countrymen and men of Ballytown, the great, glorious, and immortal cause of our unhappy sire-land, the land of Owen Roe, the land of Sarsfield—aye, and the land of Patrick O'Kelly (great cheers) would not long be under the cloud of tyranny which had now, alas, for over seven centuries disfigured her mournful, but heroic face." (Great and prolonged cheering, during which the

great statesman resumed his seat and his stony expression).

During the delivery of this harangue a great change—a revolution in fact—was working its way in the mind of Patrick O'Kelly. His resolution to avoid—except to a very mild degree—all active part in politics, would probably have withstood anything but this torrent of eloquence from High Faluter. It must be remembered that Patrick and his kind looked up at High Faluter as a great statesman, and as the most eloquent speaker of the age; he thought that he had never heard such oratory flow from the lips of mortal man, and much that was most generous and best in him, uniting with all that was shallow and vain, determined him that, let what would befall, he would throw himself into the breach for the sake of High Faluter—a man whom anyone might be proud to follow anywhere—stand for the constituency, defeat James Connor's nominee, have M.P. after his name, and, who knows, might in some inexplicable way contribute to the glory and freedom of his country.

Before the meeting broke up Patrick O'Kelly, at the request of High Faluter, who had been made aware of Patrick's determination, rose to say a few words announcing his decision.

"Men of Ballytown," said Patrick, "I have never desired to enter the gloomy portals of the English

Parliament, but at the same time I am not a stick or a stone, and I would be both at once if I could remain selfish and follow me own inclinations, afther the language—the most flowery language which I have ever had the pleasure of listenin' to—that fell from the inspired tongue of our great, noble, glorious and immortal leader, Francis Patrick Xavier High Faluter (loud cheers). I will put meself complately in his hands, an' if he thinks that be stan'in' for the constituency I can do any good to the great an' noble cause which we all have at heart, I will be led be him, and will contest the sate." This declaration on the part of Mr. Patrick O'Kelly practically brought the demonstration to an end. Shortly afterwards the bands began to play, a considerable portion of the crowd disappeared inside the public-houses, and Mr. High Faluter drove away in Mr. Peter Morris's carriage-and-pair to the railway station, where he was just in time to catch the six o'clock train to Dublin.

"Yerrah," said Larry Power, who was proprietor of a public-house in the Market Square, the next morning to a neighbour, "Yerrah, but that High Faluter has the gift o' the gab an' no mistake. Ye wouldn't know where the words would be comin' from. I believe he could keep on talkin' till mornin', an' it all in the height o' fine language."

"Do ye tell me that now," said the neighbour.

"Well, it's a great thing to have a man like that in Parliament. I daresay all th' English is very much afeerd of him."

"Ye may say that just," replied Power, and then proceeded:—"'Twas the greatest day in Ballytown I ever remember since O'Connell's time. I heerd tell that there wor over six thousand counthry people kem into the town, and I wouldn't say but what there wor, for in me own shop alone I sold seven an' a half barrels of porther."

"Look at that now," said the neighbour. "Faith, them demonsthrations is good for trade."

"You may say that just," said Larry Power.

The world even of small places like Ballytown is very complex, and whilst Larry Power was thinking kindly of demonstrations and of all the "porther" he sold, Mrs. O'Kelly was seriously ill, and Patrick had taken to drink once more. The new candidate in the Twaddleite interest broke the pledge ten minutes after he had entered the Literary and Patriotic Club on the night of the Demonstration, and Mrs. O'Kelly, who had been in failing health for some time, felt a weakness coming over her when Tom came in, his eyes beaming with triumph, with the tidings that his father was to stand for Parliament. "My God," said Mrs. O'Kelly, "has it come to that?" and she said no more until she went to bed.

Ballytown, two days after its feast of patriotism, was just like the Ballytown of any day before. Mrs. Mangan sold just as many "Tit Bits," "London Readers," and "Police Gazettes." The burlesque at the Assembly Rooms, where the tights and the high-kicks were, was crowded every night with members of the Literary and Patriotic Club, and with the rebel stalwarts from the Tweedleite camp; at the Market the patriots of Demonstration-day, when they came upon an Irish-speaking peasant with a bonav or a calf to sell, yelled and made fun of him, and told him to "Spake English an' drop yer b——y gibberish," as they had done any time the last twenty years; Miss Flanagan, with an unconscious stroke of humour, which to her dying day she will never appreciate, was preparing a paper on "Molière" for the Literary, Scientific, and Archæological Society; the Misses Williams were still waiting for officers, tucking in their skirts from their low fellow-creatures, whilst, if you could see beyond the screen of their parlour window, they were at dinner eating crubeens in their fingers; a fair percentage of the well-to-do males of the town continued the process nightly of drinking themselves to death.

But what after all do these things matter when Ballytown is represented in Parliament by a man who solemnly declared "that Ireland must be freed

by constitutional means or otherwise," and who was not in London six months when he became a minor-company promoter?

Mrs. O'Kelly is on her dying bed, Patrick is ruining himself drinking whiskey and talking clap-trap, industries are lagging, people are idle, intellect is simmering at its lowest level. Why are those trifles snatched at and held up by a sniffing pessimist? For are we not a great, glorious, and immortal people? Don't you hear the strains of "God Save Ireland" coming out with the fumes of bad whiskey from the taproom of Peter Doyle's public-house? Are there not two clubs established to further the cause of Irish Nationality in our midst, and dare you, in the face of such facts, say aught in criticism of the onward march of Ireland a Nation? What do you know, you miserable-hearted, white-livered cynic? Thus the green patriotic mind cogitates. High Faluter came to us, and we demonstrated; he lifted up our hearts with hope, and assured us that the day of our national redemption was at hand: High Faluter has gone, and there is no demonstrating to be done. Talk reasonably, man: what the deuce are you always finding fault and complaining for. Here! chuck up your nonsense and come and have a drink. Never you fear we will be a great nation when Home Rule is passed.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH CATASTROPHES OCCUR.

Things were going from bad to worse with the O'Kelly family. Dr. Andrew, brilliant and irresolute, was well known to be over head and ears in debt, with no possible ways of escape but by a wealthy marriage or by clearing out of the country. Patrick O'Kelly was drinking harder than ever, and it was whispered, with many a sad shake of the head and many a genuine tear, that Mrs. O'Kelly would never be taken alive from the bed on which she lay.

Patrick, needless to say, was not attending to his business, and Mrs. O'Kelly was no longer able to do so. What was once a prosperous concern, bringing in so much a week, was now a losing enterprise, heavily mortgaged, making so much loss every day. There was no one to look after or control the men. And, as many of the latter frequently had occasion to give a helping hand home to their staggering master, their enthusiasm for the interests of the business could not be expected to be intense. But, besides letting his business go to the dogs, Patrick had been caught by a malignant fever, then, as now, raging not only in Ballytown, but all over Ireland.

Patrick had taken to betting. The Literary and Patriotic Club was reeking with the betting fever; two young members had quite recently fled the country, by way of avoiding prosecution, for having appropriated their several employers' money, in order to enrich themselves at one stroke by putting the money on a "dead cert.," which, as it so fell out, came in second last. So strong had the fever grown that poor people had been known to pawn some of their clothes, in order to raise money for the purpose of investing it in the betting "industry," which was vigorously written up and boomed in the local and metropolitan papers. Patrick made his bets with a publican up the town, for he would feel a sort of shame if the young bloods of the home of Patriotism where patriotism was abused, and the home of Literature where literature was not read—he would be ashamed that these young gentlemen of the Patriotic and Literary Club, who spent their time betting, loafing and drinking, should observe that he was so far gone on the road to desperation as to catch at the tipster's straw.

Mrs. O'Kelly took a turn for the worse, and then for the first time Patrick realised the parlous condition in which she was; for she had kept her spirits buoyant, and talked every day of getting up tomorrow, for there was enough trouble to be met without her adding to its volume by giving way to

lowness of spirits. Patrick was staggered when he realised—or rather when he was told, for it would be incorrect to say that he realised—that his wife was dying.

Then followed remorse—alas, too late, too late.

A sudden change came over him—a change before the end. He gave up drink and betting, and turned with a sort of a desperate energy to his business affairs—too late again; the business was gone too far. He kept the worst, however, from his wife, and her last days were days full of holiness and resignation; full of peace, too, for Patrick O'Kelly had vowed by her bedside, with the Cross in his hand and tears in his eyes, that he would never drink again.

There was widespread and genuine sorrow at the death of Mrs. O'Kelly. But we will not dwell on these matters, for we would rather stimulate our readers to laughter than to tears.

Six months afterwards it was plain that, notwithstanding all his herculean efforts in the meantime, Patrick O'Kelly's affairs were in a hopeless state of bankruptcy. No one of his creditors in Ballytown cared to be the first to press him to a smash. But needless to say, his affairs were a general subject of discussion with the commercial element in the town.

"Of course," said John Lawless, the wholesale and retail ironmonger, in the course of an informal chat with some other large creditors, "Of course, he was

always a decent man, we all know that, but after all business is business; and we all can't keep solvent by refusing to press one another for what is due."

"Now that poor Mrs. O'Kelly is dead and gone—she was a pious, good woman, God rest her soul—now that she's gone, I would have less hesitation in pressing for me money," said a second.

"And why should you have any hesitation?" broke in a third. "Look at me now. What's on me isn't much. I have been minding me business for the last thirty-five years, and the divil a much there is to show for it. I have seven in family, and that tots up to twenty-wan meals a day. How mighty tendher we are about Patrick O'Kelly because he is a decent man! Why didn' he mind it when he had it? What I say is, there are too many of that kind of decent man going these days, and too few sensible steady business men without any club-going and sky-larking in Ballytown. Their dhrinking clubs are the ruination of the counthry."

"It's poor Patrick O'Kelly here and poor Patrick O'Kelly there; but no wan thinks of saying poor John Lawless. Oh, no; there's no sympathy for the likes o' me; no wan dhrops a tear of tendher sympathy over my three hundhred pounds. All the sympathy in this counthry is for the man that squandhers his life and money, neglecting his business for club-going and speechifying; there is nothing but abuse and hard names for the man that

minds his business. We're all mean-spirited fellows, if you please."

"It's thrue for you. If you stick to your business and prosper, nine out of ten will think that you must be a rogue," said James Martin, the wealthy money-lender.

Each pair of eyes present turned instinctively on some other pair of eyes, and each pair of lips curled one way or the other. For the fact was that James Martin, the money-lender, was considered, even by the most charitable, to be at least tricky.

"But if you go dhrinking," continued James, "and making a fool of yourself looking afther the country, maurya (maṗeaḋ), and neglect your business, it's 'What a decent man' and 'If he on'y minded himself, sure 'tis rolling in his carriage he would be.'"

Popular opinion in Ballytown was strongly on the side of Patrick O'Kelly; and now that he was keeping the pledge and attending to his business and doing his best to retrieve his fortunes for his creditors' sake, nobody, according to the trend of popular opinion, but one with the heart of a Jew-man, would embarrass him.

John Lawless, never too well liked, was decidedly unpopular since it got about that he was complaining and groaning about the three hundred pounds

that Patrick O'Kelly owed him. "That ould skin-flint, sure he has plenty of money," was the popular comment.

The creditors felt that it would be unpleasant, if not risky, to press a popular man like Patrick O'Kelly, for since Patrick was down on his luck, and that shadows were across his path, even the Tweedleites agreed that he was always a "decent man," and if he did abuse them and call them nasty names, sure many's the word is said in the heat of political passion.

But neither time nor forbearance were any use to Patrick O'Kelly's affairs; and no one now saw that more clearly than did Patrick himself. With all his faults, he was from the skin inwards, a twenty-shillings-in-the-pound man, and had been accustomed to look at all bankrupts as swindlers. It took five years off his life when he found, after clearing off the two mortgages, that it would be a close shave for the assets to cover a five-shilling composition.

"I am a broken man and I will never lift up me head again," said he to a meeting of his creditors. He had taken time by the forelock and had called a meeting, for he knew it was inevitable that their patience was being strained, and that if he did not make a move that they would.

"I never thought that it would come to this, for

since I commenced life I always paid twenty shillings in the pound. But I'm dead bet now, and wud the load that's on me heart it is not long I'll be left to the world."

And "bet" he was. Patrick, in his own way, was a proud man, and the mill being bought up by a stranger, and the haunting consciousness of having paid only five shillings instead of twenty in the pound, was too much for him.

Dr. Andrew did not stop to pay even five shillings in the pound on *his* debts; he quickly left the country for his own good without paying anyone. Brilliant though irresolute, he too had a place in the affections of the people, and even the outfitter, to whom he owed £90, hadn't anything bitter to say of him. "Sure, if he stuck me, he was a good-hearted poor fellow, and he was no one's enemy so much as his own."

Almost exactly a year after his wife's death Patrick O'Kelly was laid by her side. Needless to say, he got a splendid funeral. Almost one hundred members of the Patriotic and Literary Club walked in procession—many of them, and some of those quite young too, will have travelled the same last journey before the year is out. The Tweedleites and Twaddleites united over Patrick O'Kelly's grave, and men who had not talked for years to one another renewed their old acquaintance.

The calamities that had so suddenly overtaken the O'Kelly family made a deep impression on several young and middle-aged gentlemen who were no steadier than they ought to have been, and a few reformations, whether permanent or only temporary we leave the reader to decide for himself, resulted.

However, on the other hand, it is only just to state that two pledges were broken immediately after the funeral, for a large number adjourned to the bar of the Royal Hotel, and in the fullness of the flow of sympathy that abounded, the hearts of two gentlemen who had been teetotallers for eight or nine months respectively, got into such a melting state that their backbones also weakened, and each allowed the other to persuade him to take a glass of whiskey. As they were both cases of "When I drinks, I drinks," their respective families were downcast and sorrow-stricken that night.

The arrangement of the O'Kellys' affairs was a tedious and prosy business, and all that the reader will be interested to know is that a situation as governess was procured for Kitty, and that Tom had the option to go to America to his uncle, or to his aunt, who was a milliner, in Dublin. Miss Alice had long since left Ireland, and had got a lucrative situation in a Manchester monster millinery establishment. Tom, disliking the idea of emigration, for he had strong political views, decided to go to Dublin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SHORT CHAPTER, SHOWING HOW TOM SPENDS SOME TIME IN DUBLIN BEFORE LEAVING HIS COUNTRY FOR EVER.

THE appearance of everything depends largely on the point of view from which it is observed, and the temper and circumstances of the observer. In the eyes of a budding man in his teens, of normal constitution, standing on the steps of his father's house in Merrion Square, of a fine morning or a fine night, Dublin is decidedly a rollicking and interesting place. Tom saw Dublin with different eyes when, having arrived there on a murky evening, he stopped to enquire his way when he had reached the point where Dorset Street intersects Dominick Street.

The Dublin that Tom knew years back, when he and Kitty had spent their pocket-money on lemonade and cakes at various shops, had vanished into a vague remembrance. He looked back with regret to the day when he took Kitty through the Coombe, along Thomas Street, to the top of Bridgefoot Street, where Emmet was executed, and kept her there whilst he related in graphic manner all the details, with which his mind was then familiar, of that sad

episode. All had changed now. Dublin had completely altered and had become a wilderness to him. Even the red and green lights, showing from the trams at Nelson's Pillar, looked cold and cheerless to him now.

Some people, particularly in this country, never reach the calculating stage; but in most cases before the calculating stage is reached, there is the glorious day-dreaming, play-acting time, and Tom O'Kelly, like many thousands of other Irish boys, was a confirmed day-dreamer. Night after night, dressed in a green coat, with a pike in his hands, he led regiments of rebels through the gates of Dublin Castle, blew up Portobello Barracks, defeated whole armies of English soldiers with a comparative handful of Irishmen, and displayed tactics that placed Napoleon in the shade.

Time after time he marched at the head—needless to say, he was always at the head in his day-dream —of a conquering rebel army in Dublin, and presided over a happy, prosperous and great republic, until the very virtue of the country he ruled would pall upon him, and he would be glad to brush the perfect republic away like a cobweb, and lead a forlorn hope against the vile Sassanach again.

How little grown people, who have left all that behind them, consider the throbbing, opulent victories and fights, the course of which they interrupt

any day in the week when they accidentally collide with a moody lad in Capel Street, or a youth of fifteen in College Green!

When it came down to real life, the fact was, Tom wanted work and could not get it, for his aunt was only a struggling milliner, who had little or no influence. Beyond putting his name on an employment register, and inserting some advertisements in the daily papers, he did nothing in the way of looking for work. He went to political meetings in York Street and elsewhere; and one night he paid a shilling to hear a great member of Parliament lecture. Very few people turned up, and Tom pitied the great member of Parliament, and he was glad when the men at the door let the bold boys off the street come in for nothing, so as to make a crowd.

One morning his aunt rushed out to meet him as he was coming to breakfast.

"A reply at last," she exclaimed.

And such it turned out to be. His aunt suggested that the "position"—for she was too genteel to say the job, or the work—might be worth a pound a week to commence. She suggested that he should buy a new hat and also a new pair of boots before he called to the office.

When he mentioned his name in due course to the dead-eyed, parchment-faced man who interviewed him, the mouth of the latter performed a manœuvre

which Tom was too young and inexperienced to fathom, but was yet sensitive enough to feel boded no good for his chances.

"Where were you educated?" asked dead-eye.

"Christian Brothers, Ballytown," promptly replied Tom.

A bland, oily leer tarried for a moment on dead-eye's countenance.

"Ah, well, we will write to you—good day," said dead-eye.

Tom left the office, hoping against hope, that something might yet come of it. Needless to say, he never heard any more about it, for his name and the school which he had attended indicated at once to dead-eye that he was not of the proper "colour" to harmonize with the eminent firms of merchants whose business largely was with Catholic convents, colleges, clergy, and laity, but whose office staff took its tone from the head of the firm, whose great interest in life, beyond making money, was to "convert" the benighted Papists of Connacht.

Eventually, after much reference giving, standing tests in handwriting and long tots, he succeeded in getting an appointment in a Papist firm as office boy, at the rate of nothing a week to commence. And having served three months he was promoted to 5s. a week.

The head of the firm lived in Killiney, and would

give half his business to have his daughter "presented" at the Castle. But he was quite a generous spirit compared to his simpering son, who had been to Trinity College. The old fellow sometimes lost his temper and swore at everyone in the office: the son was always simpering. However, Tom was not long in his post until he conceived a feeling of amused indifference for the testy old head of the firm, and a feeling of utter contempt for the simpering son.

Tom was never very good at hiding his feelings, and truth to tell he did not take kindly to the profession of office boy, and his heart used to sink every morning when he left the street behind him, and got within the precincts of the office. Frequently his employer would say sharply: —

"What are you dreaming about?"

And Tom, with a start, would leave off leading armies of rebels, and proceed to earn his nothing a week addressing envelopes.

It was hard sort of work in a cruel environment for a lad of spirit, and it appeared to lead to no future. Only that Tom had a fixed idea, which nothing could rob him of, that once a boy was out of knickerbockers, no consideration, except pity for others, should permit tears to gather in his eyes, he often would have collapsed into floods of tears.

At this time he was a great reader of Nationalist

newspapers, the more extreme the better, and, though belonging to no secret organisation, he bought a handbook on the art of attack and defence with sword and bayonet, and practiced regularly in his aunt's back kitchen, with a poker and a broom handle, one in each hand, when he ought to have been in bed. He had an idea that a rifle could be bought for about 17s. 6d., and he had already loosened one of the boards of the floor of his bedroom, where he could hide his purchase, for he was fully imbued with the idea that every Irishman should have a rifle in readiness for the time when he would be called upon to throw off the English yoke. It was a great disillusionment to him when he summoned up courage to go into a gunsmith's and ask the price. The information supplied had a curious effect on him, for he went to the gallery of the Gaiety that night to see a farce, in the hope that he might smile again, and have his thoughts turned from the gloomy directions in which his knowledge of the price of guns had sent them.

He kept on answering advertisements, and in the course of a few months—he being then an experienced office boy—he procured a better place at 10s. a week. He bought a threepenny cigar the first Saturday night that he received his increased pay, and went out for a solitary stroll in a state of exhilaration and optimism. When he got used to the 10s. a week,

which was exactly a fortnight after he had entered his new office, the world looked as black as ever for him. What had Dublin to offer a practically friendless boy?

Peter's letters were hot with the American fever, and his uncle in the States was quite anxious that he should not be "wasting his time in the little parish." The more or less inevitable happened. His aunt, though she was fond of Tom, declared that she would not step between him and his prospects in life, and so it was decided that the lad should go to America .

It was a fine morning in early spring when Tom and his traps, with his aunt on one side and an elderly lady, a friend to his aunt, on the other, stood on the deck of the North Wall boat bound for Liverpool.

He was leaving his native land, as many a million of his countrymen had left it before him. He still lived in a haze of "first flower of the earth and first gem of the sea" sentimentality, and he had read in the pages of the national penny journals, many and many a time, a tale of the young Irish heroes looking wistfully over the side of the ship, filled with noble thoughts and melting with patriotic emotion as they took their last looks at their native land.

When Tom had stowed his traps safely away, he went to the side of the boat and looked out at the

North Wall, up to the Custom House and down towards Clontarf, and he thought of the young heroes he had read of in the Anglo-Irish romances. We only do him justice in saying that he did his level best to feel as those young heroes of romance were wont to feel on similar occasions. But it was no use. If anyone told him that he was glad to be shaking the dust of his glorious and immortal country from his feet, he would have repudiated the suggestion with the most genuine indignation.

He was leaving 10s. a week and no prospects, yet he was distressed that he did not feel as Rory Oge O'Grady, in the latest serial romance in the "Emerald Gem" felt, as he (Rory) watched, to use the words of the author of that incisive romance, "as he watched the fading outline of his historic land; the land of Patrick and Columbkille, the land of saints and scholars, whose every sod was sanctified by the blood of patriots, and from whose every glen were heard strange echoes as of voices from a dim past, calling on the noble sons of Ireland to smite the tyrant, and place their sireland once more in the proud position which she would yet occupy amongst the nations of the earth."

No, it was no use; it was evident that Tom was made of coarser clay than Rory Oge O'Grady, and he felt humble accordingly. He would not for a moment admit to himself that he was glad to be

leaving Ireland, and that he looked forward with secret pleasure to some material prosperity in America. Such thoughts as that were sordid; it was bad enough not to be able to share the emotions of Rory Oge O'Grady without—ugh!

Whilst in this state of self pity, several peasants slipped on board with bundles over their shoulders, and parcels carried by their sides.

His aunt and her friend had left the boat and stood by on the landing stage, and Tom, feeling desolate and lonely, followed the peasants with his eyes wherever they went. They were from Clare, and were *en route* for Australia. One young strapping fellow, with red hair and a slight squint in one eye became, in Tom's fancy, a living specimen of Rory Oge O'Grady, of the serial romance in the "Emerald Gem."

"I suppose," said Tom to him, when he had succeeded in engaging the Clare boy in conversation, "I suppose, as soon as you've made enough money in Australia, you'll lose no time in coming back to Ireland for good?"

The young Clare peasant put his red head on one side and shut the eye with the squint, and maintaining a contemplative poise for a moment, he burst out abruptly by way of reply:—

"Faith, then, I'd'n know; I hear tell that the women out there are very enticin'."

Tom returned into himself more confused than ever. But in a few moments the boat got ready for sea. He waved his handkerchief to his aunt and her friend, and they waved back. But his eyes were dry as the ship sailed out of Dublin Bay.

. . . . . .

The subsequent history of Tom, as well as of Peter, is a prosy story of life in America, of which country they are naturalised citizens. Both are now married, and both have young families who speak with a twang.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAST CHAPTER IN WHICH THE AUTHOR, VIOLATING ALL CONVENTION, POPS UP HIS HEAD AND HAS A FEW WORDS WITH HIS READERS.

Some persons will assuredly consider that in parts of this book the author is sketching themselves or their friends, for there are few highly respectable families in Anglo-Ireland who have not several characters in this book amongst their immediate acquaintances, if not amongst their relatives. Highly respectable, sentimental, young Anglo-Irish ladies of the Miss Alice type are as plentiful as blackberries; and as for Miss Mary—you can see scores of that sort any day. Drop into a bazaar, and you will find her behind one of the stalls; look up at the dress circle in the theatre, when the French plays come round, and, if you observe her long enough, you will discover that, in nine cases out of ten, she will—in her anxiety to pretend she knows French—compromise her well-known modesty by laughing at the wrong jokes. In fact, madam, highly respectable Anglo-Irish urban life, of which the Miss Marys think themselves such ornaments, is a shoddy business. Look at it wherever you

will, madam, and, upon your honour, is it not shoddy? Turn your eyes where you will—into the Library of the Four Courts, on a dinner of the members of the medical profession, on a meeting of journalists, on a demonstration of politicians; examine those who would lay down nine lives for their country—if, like the lucky cats, they had so many—and those who would sell their country for a permanent "competency" under the Government; observe the young ladies of "fashion" who "shop" after four o'clock in Grafton Street, and dress themselves out in most fascinating style for the Horse Show; listen, if your nerves can bear it, to those who spend the time that might be profitably given to the mangle or the wash-tub, thumping pianos and scraping fiddles. Wherever you turn, madam, the pictures are so deplorable that it is a blessing to be gifted with a wide capacity for enjoying the ridiculous. Those downright, narrow, honest spirits—Heaven help them—to whom a keen sense of humour has been denied, are indeed to be specially pitied in this country. You don't agree with all this, madam; of course not! Neither would the actors in the grotesque pantomime of highly respectable Anglo-Irish life. In the first place they don't want to see things as they are, in all their shoddy horror, for they are part and parcel of the scheme themselves, and, in the second place, their brain culture, madam,

even that of such of them as attend the Abbey Theatre regularly, is none of the best.

Amongst the readers of this unique book there may be a Mr. John Bull or two. I would like to have a word with Mr. Bull. One of the minor evils attendant on Ireland having a common language with England, is that an Irishman cannot turn round and speak plainly to his countrymen, talk to them brusquely for their own good, paint the warts on their noses, and mayhap, in the exuberance of enthusiasm, put on the colours thick, for his own and others amusement, without running the risk of letting Mr. Bull know all about it. And that is probably one of the reasons why Irishmen, in speech and print, have been, and are, so strongly tempted to idealise their "glorious and immortal" country and countrymen.

Mr. Bull is permanently round the corner, ready to cry out—"Did you hear that; listen to what these Irish are saying of themselves!" I cannot prevent Mr. Bull paying his money for this book if he has a mind that way, but it was not written for his market. I know you fairly well, Mr. Bull, and you do not interest me. If this book should give you even one unctuous laugh, at the expense of my countrymen, kindly take it from me that I am laughing at you. There is hope, great hope, for Ballytown, for, though its veneer is false, its heart

is sound enough, and it has a twinkle in its eye; but—and I don't suppose you care a straw for my opinion of you any more than I care what you think of my country, I regard you as belonging to a nation that has long since seen its best days. And now, Mr. Bull, I think we understand each other.

I should like to have a few words with the Sweet Boy Graduates, any one of whom, I have no doubt—in his own modest estimation at least—could have written a better book than this if he condescended to try. Before the Sweet Boy Graduates pass judgment on this original work, they must, of course, consult their text-books rather than their brains—should they have any of the latter; and not finding anything in their text-books to direct them to a verdict on this unusual work, they will roll their eyes in their boyish-serious way, and ask—"Are there visions about?" As a matter of fact, we may parenthetically remark, there are plenty of visions stalking round before the eyes of our dear Sweet Boy Graduates. We, men, deal in realities. Another Sweet Boy Graduate will ask—"Do you call this Art? Is this a novel?" And, with that intense strength of conviction that comes from an inexperienced head full of school-book knowledge, and the amusing conceit that the combination generates, he will lay down the book with a bang, a killing and highly intellectual sneer playing upon

his lip the while. "Why, sir," yet another S. B. G. will exclaim, "Why, sir, I have in my hand a book written by a recognised authority and prescribed in the Sweet Boy Graduates' curriculum of the Imperial University, which clearly states that a novel should——" And yet another, a profound M.A., who never smiles, interrupts—"And Aristotle states that a plot——"

A truce, Sweet boys, to these unseemly remarks. Are you sure that, all your text-books notwithstanding, your little callow heads have done any real thinking yet? I'm not. Frankly, I don't trouble whether this book is Art or not. Neither am I concerned whether the bibliophile will class this as a novel, a treatise, a pamphlet, or a work of travel.

My parting word is reserved for the young gentlemen in the cloaks, with long hair and solemn, pale faces, who hear "lake-water lapping," even when they are stirring their punch. Lifting up their voices they will mournfully chant—

"Where, oh, where, is the Celtic Note?"

I have only to answer frankly—I don't know; I never met it in Ballytown.

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